THE SMART SET

A Magazine of Cleverness

To Amuse. Not to Instruct

THE MAN TRAP

THE LITTLE FIGURE IN THE ENORMOUS TAPESTRY

"DARLING"

THE LAST PICTURE

POOR WINNIE! POOR TOWNY!

THE ETERNAL QUADRANGLE

AND MANY OTHER STORIES, POEMS, ETC.

DECEMBER 1920

1/6 NET

'PHONE: 3520 KENSINGTON

BARKERS

CATALOGUES ON APPLICATION

The Great Kensington Shop for Ladies' Fashions

GREAT SALON SHOWS

Remarkable Values in the Elegant Tailor-made Suit.
Barker Blouses are famous for Value: known all over the World.
The Largest Stocks of Silk and Dress Fabrics in London

DAILY WINDOW SHOWS

KENSINGTON HIGH STREET, W. 8.

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

The entire contents of this magazine are protected by copyright in all countries and must not be reprinted

Editor—J. W. MILNE

DECEMBER, 1920

THE RETURN	W. Battersby-Parks	303
THE WISE MAN	H. S. Bayron	304
TRANSFORMATION	Jessie B. Rittenhouse	304
THE MAN TRAP	Rebecca Hooper Eastman	305
ECHO	A. Newberry Choyce	316
THE WAY OF IT	Lawrance Vail	317
THE LITTLE FIGURE IN THE ENORMOUS TAPESTRY	Stephen Ta Van	319
FROM THE BOOK OF MIRACLE	Leslie Nelson Jennings	338
THE TELEPHONE CALL	Violet M. Lezard	339
GHOSTS	Harold Seton	340
POISE	Helen C. Roberts	341
A BEGGAR	Charles Divine	344
"DARLING"	Richmond Brooks Barrett	345
I WILL GO BACK	Clinton Scollard	353
TIDINGS	T. F. Mitchell	354
THE GODDESS	Charles T. Ryder	354
ON A PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN AUGUST	Thyra Samter Winslow	355
THE MAGNIFICENT MAJOR	Clarkson Crane	365
RONDO	Leslie Nelson Jennings	368
THE LAST PICTURE	Paul Hervey Fox	369
BUT STILL—	Muna Lee	377
LULLABY FEAR	Mary Carolyn Davies	378
MISS MELBY'S CHANGE OF HEART	John Hunter Sedgwick	379
PERSONAL NOTE	William Drayham	385
YET I AM MOVED PROFOUNDLY	James Grayson	386
INVOCATION	Edith Chapman	386
POOR WINNIE! POOR TOWNY!	Paul Brooks	387
PAR PERSUASION	Gaston Roupnel	395
I CANNOT CALL THE SAINTS TO MIND	John McClure	397
THE ETERNAL QUADRANGLE	Donna Shinn	398
ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS	Mary Pitcairn	400

Annual Subscription, 18/- post free. Foreign Subscription, 19/- post free.

Published by THE ROLLS HOUSE PUBLISHING CO., LTD., Breams Buildings, E.C., for the Proprietor, J. W. Da Costa.

"The Smart Set" Magazine, Dane's Inn House, 265 Strand, W.C. 2
to which all editorial and advertising matter should be addressed.

For Shopping, Races, Theatres, or any other purpose,

HIRE A CAR

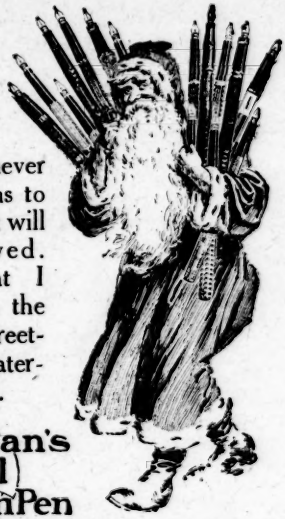
FROM

KELTIE'S GARAGE LTD.

Telephone:
KENSINGTON 1299

72 Gloucester Road, S.W.7

There's one for everyone



There is never any doubt as to how the gift will be received. "Just what I wanted" is the invariable greeting to Waterman's Ideal.

Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen

Three types: "Self-Filling" and "Safety," **17/6** and upwards; "Regular," **12/6** and upwards. No. 54 "Self-filling" with extra large nib, at **22/6**, *specially recommended.* In Silver and Gold for presentation. Nibs to suit all hands. Of Stationers and Jewellers. Write for Illustrated List to

L. G. Sloan, Ltd., The Pen Corner
Kingsway, London, W.C. 2.

RALPH LYNN
Star Comedian, Vaudeville Theatre

ARTHUR CLEAVE
Well-known Actor and Film Star

ACADEMY OF CINEMA ACTING

DAILY INSTRUCTION

Apply for terms:

R.L. ACADEMY,
15, PAVILION RD., KNIGHTSBRIDGE

SHERRY'S

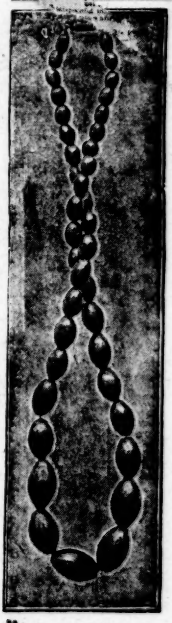
MIDDLE STREET, BRIGHTON

The World's Finest Ballroom

DANCING

:: :: Daily at 3 and 8. :: ::

AMERICAN COCKTAIL AND OYSTER BAR.



GOOD'S
"Cameo Corner"
FOR
CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

Real Antique Amber, Old Georgian Boxes. Specimen pieces of Old Ivories. Rare Antique Intaglios and Old Georgian Silver.

Many perfect examples of 17th and 18th Century Jewellery.

Charming pieces of Real Historic Interest at moderate prices.

Selections sent on approval to all parts of the country.

Full market value given for Diamonds, Pearls, and precious stones of every description.

GOOD'S
"Cameo Corner"
I, NEW OXFORD ST.,
LONDON, W.C. I

Telephone: Museum, 4296

Telegrams: "Goocamecor, Westcent, London."

WHEN IN BRIGHTON

LET'S MEET AT Billy's NEAR BY THE GRAND HOTEL

SPECIALITE TEAS—HOME-MADE CAKES & SCONES.
Tea that is made fresh with water really on the boil.
DINNERS & RECHERCHÉ SUPPERS till 11 p.m.
"A WELSH RAREBIT AT BILLY'S AND SO TO BED."

YOUR DESTINY

A scientific investigation into the forces controlling your destiny
INTERESTING REVELATIONS
Send DATE, TIME, and PLACE of BIRTH
Readings at 5s., 10s. 6d., £1 1s. and £2 2s. Birthday Reading at 2s. 8d.
Questions of an IMPORTANT nature A SPECIALITE, 10/6 each query.
All Orders receive my Personal Attention.
S. ROBERT RAYE, 97, Brondesbury Villas, Kilburn, London, N.W. 6

THE
INDIAN RESTAURANTS, LTD.

9, LEICESTER PLACE, LEICESTER SQUARE.

Controlled by Indians with Indian Service.

Tables Reserved by 'Phone.
Gerrard 3272.

POPE & BRADLEY
Civil Military & Naval Tailors
of OLD BOND ST LONDON W.

DEHUMENIZED

To meet the many requests, reproductions of some of this series of pictures, including "The Interrupted Jazz," "The Beautiful Rag," and "Victory," are now published in colour, 17 in. by 12 in. at 1s. each.

DISCIPLINE

By H. DENNIS BRADLEY.

HAVING won the "war to end wars," we proceed with characteristic stupidity to prepare for the next.

It was the liveliness of being unprepared which defeated the deadliness of Germany's preparation.

Discipline was the ruin of Germany.

But our rulers have learnt nothing. Despite the colossal failure of the doctrine of Force, it is still accepted as the only means of government. Hence the chaotic economic condition of the world to-day.

Two years after the Armistice militarism is still rampant and seeking fresh adventure; fresh armies are being recruited, and in most of our Public Schools, Military Training Corps are compulsory. So, at the dawn of Youth, is a healthy Individualism sacrificed to the false god of Discipline.

Historians a century hence will laugh at us for barbaric fools.

The present system of army training is neither appropriate, efficient, nor instructive. Forming fours or manœuvring round cow-sheds is of no use in modern warfare.

The prospective soldiers in every country should be trained to the realities and inured to endurance. They should be dumped in a foul-smelling trench, infested with lice and surrounded by unspeakable filth, and patriotic civilians should dance round them, singing "You stay in the corner with ideals while we make a corner by low deals."

That is twentieth century Discipline.

* * * * *

Discipline is the mother of Delusion.

Discipline is an invention for the castigation of impotent minds.

Discipline as preached by those in power may be analysed thus, "You do as I tell you, then I can do as I like." Discipline is used for the physical exhibition of political rage.

Discipline is the chain of tradition and convention.

Discipline is the key which locks the gate of intellect.

Discipline is the arch-enemy of the artist.

Discipline in love is the negation of the beautiful.

Discipline is not for the new and splendid generation.

Discipline is anti-Dionysus.

* * * * *

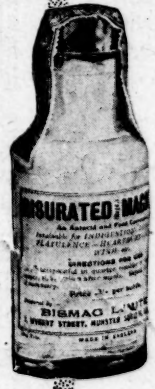
It is so much easier to attack Discipline than to defend the mountainous price of clothes. These prices, however, are at least as reasonable as the essay. Lounge Suits from £12 12s. Dinner Suits from £16 16s. Dress Suits from £18 18s. Overcoats from £10 10s.

14 OLD BOND STREET W
& 11 & 13 SOUTHAMPTON ROW W.C
& at ROYAL EXCHANGE MANCHESTER

Try this if you have INDIGESTION

If you suffer from pain after meals or any of the other countless miseries which go hand in hand with indigestion, try this simple plan: Take half-a-teaspoonful of Bisurated Magnesia with a sip of water the next time you get an attack of stomach pain—

Hold a watch on the operation



and see how soon the pain goes. Within five minutes by that watch—probably within three minutes—all trace of pain will have disappeared and you will be feeling happy and comfortable! Think of it.....the speed.....the simplicity of the thing! Bisurated Magnesia succeeds in over ninety out of every hundred cases; it does so because it neutralises and destroys the harmful stomach acid which causes the trouble. Furthermore, it prevents all possibility of food fermentation, thereby enabling the contents of the stomach to remain sweet and bland throughout the whole process of digestion. You can get Bisurated Magnesia from any chemist at 3/- a bottle, or if you prefer tablets, you can obtain it in this form at 1/3 and 2/6 a flask. A guarantee of satisfaction or money back is included with every package, so that you risk nothing by giving Bisurated Magnesia a trial. When purchasing be sure to look for the name "BISMAG, LIMITED" on the package, as this ensures you getting the only genuine and *really* guaranteed kind. Make a note of the name—

BISURATED MAGNESIA

POWDER 3/- A BOTTLE

PREPARED SOLELY BY:-
BISMAG LTD.
Wybert St. Munster Sq.
LONDON. N.W.1.

TABLETS 1/3 & 2/6 A FLASK

The Choicest of Gifts

EAU DE COLOGNE

JOHANN MARIA FARINA

HANSA PLATZ

REFRESHING LASTING
NONE SO FRAGRANT

2'6, 4'6
8'6 &
Wickers

Get it at Harrods, Barkers, Whiteleys, D. H. Evans and Perfumers Everywhere

Wholesale Depôt: Black Bull Works, Caledonian Market, London, N. 7.

Vol. LXII DECEMBER, 1920 No. 4

THE RETURN

By W. Battersby-Parks

THOUGH years have passed and far I've ranged,
'Tis good to find thou art not changed,
O Haven underneath the hill!
Unchanged the beauty dear to me
Of the lone cliffs and purple sea,
And kindly hearts dwell in thee still.

The gulls are crying as of yore,
The surges sighing on the shore,
Making their ancient melody;
And as of old thy quiet charm
Brings to the weary breast a balm,
O Haven where my heart would be!

FAMOUS men—Cæsar, Napoleon, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Dante, Milton, Shakespeare, Columbus, Pizzaro, Watt. Famous women—Madame de Pompadour, Carrie Nation, Gaby Deslys. . . .

THE WISE MAN

By H. S. Bayron

AT the age of twenty, he worshipped women. At twenty-five he loved them. At thirty-five he spoke to them as though he were in love with them, and made them love him, for the sake of amusement. At forty-five he made up his mind to get married. At forty-six he changed his mind.

TRANSFORMATION

By Jessie B. Rittenhouse

I SHALL be beautiful when you come back,
With beauty that is not of lips or eyes,
And you will look at me with swift surprise
Seeing in me that loveliness I lack;

And you will wonder how this beauty grew
In all the restless clamour of the days—
Not knowing that I walk in cloistered ways,
Bearing within one rapt, sweet thought of you.

WHEN a woman starts bragging about the virtues of her husband, be sure to look him up. He can show you a good time.

ZOO: the place where the monkeys wonder what it is all about.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
25 NO
1920
CAMBRIDGE

THE MAN TRAP

By Rebecca Hooper Eastman

I

AS she toyed idly with her gold soup spoon, Hildegarde Huckle now and then glanced superiorly at Archie Neff, who was using *his* gold soup spoon to scrape the last delicious drop of Mrs. Huntington's famous chef's rich purée from the priceless plates of Sèvres. Although everything else was according to the Queen's taste, the table was so large that the dinner party of fourteen guests was seated too far apart to indulge in familiar asides. Archie, for instance, could barely refrain from saying to Hildegarde:

"This is no place to diet! Forget your figure and go to it!"

Archie Neff was a bachelor wavering into the forties. He was both rich and indolent and, although nobody respected him, everybody liked him. Damp days depressed him so that he almost wept. Whenever there was a blizzard, Archie went to bed and stayed until it was over and it was safe for bachelors and limousines to venture out. He had a cherubic countenance, a superb collection of inherited antiques, and a leathery-faced valet named Pitts, who was said to be rich in his own right.

When he was sixteen and she was twenty, Archie, who had then lived next door to Hildegarde, had often received handsome donations of ice cream and spun sugar which were left over after Hildegarde's "grown-up" parties.

Now that Hildegarde had attained a perpetual twenty-nine, she often jocosely referred to the time when, as a mere chit of a girl, she had been greatly in awe of Archie, as one of the big boys! She had harped on this so often that Archie, who was hazy about dates, and too easygoing to argue, had actually come to believe that Hildegarde was ten years his junior. He hated her, he was annoyed by her grand manner, which varied according to the occasion and her mood, he was bewildered by her many varieties of earrings, and yet she was a perpetual source of amusement to him, in spite of the fact that he realized that she would probably marry him for his money some day. For Hildegarde Huckle was as poor as it is possible to be and remain in society without working.

Being poor, Hildegarde was obliged to be entertaining, and just as sure as it rained Archie would be ringing her doorbell and begging to be amused until the wet spell was over. Hildegarde immediately made him take her to luncheon at a hideously expensive place, and then to a play, in the best seats. Archie didn't mind, as long as she selected the restaurant, planned the menu, chose the play, telephoned his chauffeur Jenks, and took charge of all the heavy arrangements necessary to an afternoon's junketing.

On the particular night when Hildegarde had elected to omit the soup at Mrs. Schuyler's she wore such a haughty expression and so flaunted her grandest manner that Archie was afraid that someone with money had proposed at last and that Hildegarde had accepted him. If such was the case, he would have to have an understanding with the fellow about seeing Hildegarde in rainy weather. When the champagne came, Archie noted that Hildegarde sipped it as ungratefully as

if it were only so much water. If she felt any kick in it, she registered no visible response. Later, when they were all going on for the last half of the opera, he managed to whisper in her ear:

"Why are you so independent tonight? Have you had a windfall?"

To which Hildegarde replied, without lowering her voice:

"I will tell you all about it on the way home in your car!"

"Then it's nothing. You just want to save the price of a taxi!"

"I can ride home with Godfrey Tomlinson. He's always hospitable with his car. Many's the time Godfrey has said 'If you can't get anybody else—'"

"Oh, well, then I suppose I can take you!"

During the opera, as he watched the penniless Hildegarde looking snobbishly down from Mrs. Schuyler's box on the mere nobodies in the stalls, Archie regretted yielding. By some ruse or other Hildegarde always trapped him into taking her home.

"By behaving so unnaturally, you completely spoiled my evening!" began Archie, the instant that Jenks had closed the car door. "And I'm asked to the Schuylers only about once a year. To think of your wasting that soup! I dare say one of the footmen drank it in the pantry. It is fortunate that butlers and footmen are not expected to talk at dinners, for I know their mouths are always full. More than once I've caught 'em chewing!"

With an immense mental effort, Archie returned to the point. "Well, Hildegarde, out with your news!"

"I never believed you had energy enough to be so curious!"

"I pride myself on my healthy and abounding curiosity, and you know it."

"And *you* know, Archie, how poverty-stricken I am, and how continually I am obliged to go without essentials in order to buy myself the necessary luxuries. Well—at last I have come into possession of something which even *you* will envy me."

"Stop preparing me, and tell me."

"Wait until we get home!"

"If you aren't careful, dear Hildegarde, you'll get me into such a state that I can't sleep a wink."

"Wait, Jenks!" said Archie, as his car stopped in front of the house, which had once been in a fashionable neighbourhood.

II

He followed Hildegarde up her high stoop, watched her let herself in, and plodded after her into her large, shabby drawing-room, where she first switched on several dim lights, and then, with a surpassing gesture copied from Mary Garden threw her evening coat over a throne chair, enjoying the fact that no one guessed that the coat was made from some old portières. Then, after a brief becoming pose, she rushed for her cigarettes and began to pace up and down and smoke.

"If you are expecting me to propose, I won't!" said Archie.

She wore an irritating gown. It was made of golden-brown tulle, and was soft and rarely becoming except for a long wisp of fabric which fell from her left shoulder-blade to the floor, where it terminated in a large bronze bead which rattled after her along the parquetry. If you closed your eyes, Hildegarde sounded like a child playing marbles. To Hildegarde the bead was the making of her imported frock, and she took an ungodly delight in seeing people stoop to pick it up. As they did so, she would move innocently away.

Having paced until Archie was ready to swear, she suddenly threw aside the cigarette and sank down in the throne chair, where, despite her perpetual twenty-nine, she looked charming. The chair was rich Italian red, and the portière-coat was Flemish blue.

"You always stage things well!" conceded Archie.

"This is the situation: I own a lot of stock in a hotel in Pittsburgh."

"Which, like everything else you have, never pays you any dividend. I never loan—"

"The hotel has not only paid me this

year's dividend, but also all the back dividends."

"This is merely a bait!"

"Is it, indeed?" And a delicious mockery crept into her voice and eyes.

"Let's see the precious dividend. Bring it here!"

"I can't, because it's down cellar."

"Down cellar?"

"Yes. Barrels and barrels of the finest old Scotch whisky; cases and cases of champagne, clarets, Burgundies, sauternes galore—not to mention port, Moselle and Chianti."

"They—how'd it get here?"

"I drove over the road with it myself, last November, in a moving van. Of course I had a driver, but I wouldn't trust any man alone with it. And every time I saw anyone looking as if he thought it was odd for me to be riding along in a moving van I handed out a leaflet on suffrage."

"Why haven't you told me all this before?"

"At first I thought it was a joke on me—to have a dividend like that. I wouldn't even have gone over the road after it except that it's the first time in my life that I ever had a plenitude of anything. From the way that all the men are taking Prohibition, I began to realize lately that I had something other people—*you*, for instance—might want very badly."

One trouble with being lazy was that Archie never thought anything would happen that he didn't wish to happen. He never thought, for instance, that the country would go dry, and it had, and here he was, caught without a drop of anything. And he refused to muss up his place with making his own brew. Even though the dry laws were months old, everywhere he went people were either surreptitiously producing something, with sly glances and winks, or else telling him where he could get a drink, and otherwise reminding him of his dry state. When he was at the theatre Archie put his hands over his ears when he heard the Prohibition joke coming, as women do in pistol scenes. And now Hildegarde Huckle, of all people, was glibly enumerating her wealth of vintages.

"I've got to go home and think before I make you any sort of proposition, Hildegarde," he said at last. He was as wretched as he ever allowed himself to get.

"Come down cellar and have a look!" suggested Hildegarde. And she lighted a seven-branch Jerusalem candlestick and started on ahead.

"Is somebody breaking into the wine cellar?" called an anxious feminine voice from above.

It was Hildegarde's Aunt Hildegarde, who was her chaperon and buffer. For anyone as unusual as Hildegarde needed some sort of buffer to stand between her and a constantly astonished world.

"It's only Archie, who wants to see my dividend. Go back to bed, Auntie!"

Aunt Hildegarde, with Hildegarde's maid Bishop, made up the Huckle ménage. Bishop's first name was Jane, but she was willing to be called Bishop in order to lend glamour to the establishment. The way in which Pitts worshipped Archie was exceeded only by Bishop's passionate approval of Hildegarde. After serving the two Hildegardes their breakfast in bed, Bishop would sweep down the house in the morning, serve a smart luncheon at half-past one, wash the windows that showed most in the afternoon, and, unless Hildegarde dined out, would dish up a fascinating little dinner at eight.

Anyone as popular as Hildegarde made it her business to be seldom at more than one meal at home during the day, but even granting this it would have taken a retinue to fill Bishop's place. Bishop's one fault was her cordial hatred for Archie Neff, which hatred caused her to be the only person on earth whom the pampered bachelor feared. After learning that Bishop did all the papering and painting when the Hildegardes were away on their rounds of visits, Archie was afraid to be left alone with Bishop for fear she would become violent.

Meantime he was following the

bronze bead and the Jerusalem candlestick to the cellar.

"You are not to tell a soul," said Hildegarde.

"Does Bishop know?"

"Bishop knows everything, but she's a Prohibitionist, so there's no danger of her helping herself—if that's what you mean."

"Even so, Hildegarde, you aren't safe with this stuff in the house. Even if no one steals it, there are men low and base enough to be capable of marrying you for your cellar. It's a regular man trap."

"Sometimes, Archibald, I think that you forget that it takes two to make a marriage," said Hildegarde crisply, as she started upstairs again with the candlestick held high above her head.

For the first time in her life she had Archie Neff just where she wanted him. That was the reason why she had told him about the dividend. After being patronized by everyone you know for twenty years it is an intense relief to change rôles.

Very soberly Mr. Neff followed his hostess up her dingy stairs, very respectfully did he gaze upon her as she strolled about in her ultra-smart frock. The scratching bronze bead became musical in its rhythmic pursuit of Miss Huckle, and the shabby drawing-room turned quaint.

"Too bad, though, to waste that cellar on a woman!" moaned Archie, as he started home.

III

Had Archie not been so constitutionally indolent he would have proposed and acquired the cellar then and there. Procrastinating, as usual, he felt that in the morning he would feel more rested and better able to handle the dilemma aptly.

When morning came, however, he argued that there was plenty of time to decide, and so he lay in bed comfortably reading last night's papers. In these troublous times, if you kept half a day behind on the newspapers you could always reflect, when your paper was half a day old, that the news was stale by now, and that somebody had fixed up Mexico and sugar and the railroads. After luncheon he went down to his club to read the morning papers and see any new feminine styles that happened along Fifth Avenue. . . . *Could* he marry Hildegarde and Aunt Hildegarde and Bishop just for the sake of having one of the best cellars in the city?

Far away in the club gymnasium a college Glee Club was practising and rehearsing the programme to be given that night in the ballroom of the Waldorf. The wild, Oriental strains were soothing until somebody left a door open and Archie caught the words. The name of the piece, he gathered, was "Dry as a Camel's Tonsils," and he caught snatches of the words:

"Dry as the bones of Moses
Dry as de-dum-dum-dore
(indistinguishable)
Dry as the bunch of roses
That Cleopatra wore!

Dry as a Finnan Haddie
That never saw the sea—"

"That's a pretty mournful song to warble around a man's club these days," remarked Godfrey Tomlinson from behind his paper.

"If I should tell you something, could you *possibly* keep it to yourself?" queried Archie.

Godfrey at once rose and came over with an open notebook and a fountain pen.

"Put up your writing materials—this is no drug-store dodge. Do you know who has the best cellar in town, old man?"

"If I did I wouldn't be here."

"Hildegarde Huckle has enough to last the two of us out."

"Shall we go right down there now?"

"She isn't serving it. Tell you about it."

The sight of the two club loafers with their heads together animatedly discussing something in whispers drew a

crowd of acquaintances. Almost before he had heard the news Godfrey had passed it on, and in the end everybody heard about Hildegarde's dividend, and everybody made a mental memorandum about going round to see her that afternoon or evening.

As he saw the mob-spirit growing with the communications of the gossiping Godfrey, Archie sat down and scrawled Hildegarde a note:

"*So sorry and so full of compunctions, Hildegarde, but I forgot my pledge of secrecy and told one man, and then the story of your dividend got going 'round the club like wild-fire. Thought I'd warn you that you might have delegations of callers. Don't let any of them in. I told everybody that you weren't serving it, and that I supposed you were going to catch a husband with it.*

"*Love to dear Bishop. Will be 'round to-night to talk over your man trap.*

"ARCHIE."

Because the Glee Club was again beginning to touch up the weak spots in the camel's tonsils and adenoids, Archie left the club, feeling that the song clouded the issue of his taking on Hildegarde for life.

Just as he was going into his second best club, Archie chanced to meet pretty little Mrs. Jimmy Anderson. She was all smiles and the latest Paris fashions, and the sight of her reminded Archie that Prohibition had arrived only just in time to save the Andersons. Jimmy, who had been headed for the D.T.'s, had turned right-about-face and was living up to the best that was in him, which, although below the average, was a contrast to his previous behaviour.

"You're complete, all but the bunch of orchids," remarked Archie, who had noted that they were near a florist's. "Would Jimmy object if I—"

"Not in the least, and neither would I!" said Mrs. Jimmy, dimpling.

And she went on her way happier than ever with her flowers.

"The worst part of Prohibition is that everybody has to acknowledge that it's a good thing—for others!" mused Archie.

A company of galloping policemen driving back the crowds indicated that a parade of some sort was approaching. Just as the band caught up with Archie it began to play the next number.

"*Give* us a drink, bar-tender!" blared the cornets. To which the flutes replied, knowingly: "There *is* a tavern in the town!"

The march seemed to be a compilation of drinking songs. "How dry I am!" proclaimed the cornets, *forte*, after having failed, apparently, to learn the address of the tavern from the flutes. "Landlord, fill the flowing bowl!" commanded the flutes.

"No song writer of to-day could refer to landlords and flowing bowls in the same breath and get away with it," thought Archie wretchedly. And he strolled into a side street, hailed a passing hansom and climbed aboard, saying, "Park or anywhere! Call me in an hour!"

If he married Hildegarde he would be the envy of his friends. Yes, he'd do it! Marrying wasn't much work for the bridegroom. Hildegarde would be willing to buy the ushers' gifts and plan the bachelor dinner. But then they would have to live downtown in her house, because it was against the law to move the stuff. And he hated the dingy old neighbourhood where he used to live. Hildegarde's entire house would have to be done over, and that would mean tame-cat interior decorators crowding round the tea-table every day and talking about reflecting his moods in the draperies, and—

"Time's up, sir. Decided where you want to go?"

"Back to East Seventieth."

No, interior decorators on top of the wedding and honeymoon would be too much. It would be simpler to point out to Hildegarde the futility of marriage and get her to agree not to marry anybody, and then buy a little of her stock, or rather her dividend, as he desired.

IV

THAT night, when Pitts, who was butler as well as valet, was mixing the French dressing, Archie told him about Hildegarde's cellar.

"Then Miss Huckle is now quite a catch, sir," said Pitts with an inscrutable lilt of his right eyebrow.

"So it would appear, Pitts. Regular man trap."

"I shall never cease to regret our not laying anything in, sir."

"Are you by any chance suggesting that I marry Miss Huckle, Pitts?"

"Oh, *no*, sir."

The words were innocent, but the intonation was so artful that Archie eyed his man with suspicion.

"Hildegarde, dear, I want you to sell me a case of champagne," Archie found himself saying fervently in her dimly-lit drawing-room at nine.

Hildegarde was distractingly brilliant to-night, and she was *through* with men. Her table was covered with telegrams from thirsty swains. Godfrey Tomlinson, having been denied entrance by Bishop, had sent a day-letter with a proposal of marriage. One or two others had proposed, and the rest made different offers to buy. At least ten men had been turned away by the redoubtable Bishop.

"Don't sell any—except to me!" advised Archie, who had gone to the unusual exertion of bringing some roses.

"I had no idea that my barrels and boxes would make such a stir!" Hildegarde remarked, half in triumph, half in disgust. "I am perfectly disgusted with most of the men on my list. Those that aren't running private stills are paying huge prices for drinks, and flaunting the fact that they can afford to be tipsy. Men who never drank are going round half-drunk all the time. I heard one say he was going to Europe to get a drink. You make me think of a lot of boarding-school girls making fudge after midnight, with their petticoats hung over the transoms! I shall *not* dole out my dividend to you, or anyone else, Archie, and I shall beware of all marriage proposals."

"Your dividend has gone to your head, dear Hildegarde. Funny how some people can't stand even a little power!"

"Mr. Diggers!" announced Bishop, with a sniff.

Archie rose, frowning.

Who was Mr. Diggers?

Nobody, apparently, if appearances counted for anything. The fellow didn't even know how to enter a room. No wonder Bishop sniffed!

Mr. Diggers was sandy-haired, with the effect of a beard, and he reminded Archie of someone in amateur theatricals with his make-up half off. His baggy, worn suit of homespun seemed to have no relation to his wiry, alert form. There was, however, an arresting quality about this nonentity which struck Archie unpleasantly. Seeing that Hildegarde seemed visibly embarrassed, Archie judged that Mr. Diggers, whoever he was, had come in on the wrong cue.

"I'll just call Aunt Hildegarde," said Hildegarde. "She'll be *so* glad to see you *both!*"

Conversation of the usual society sort became impossible with a man like Diggers sitting on the side lines. Diggers said nothing to Archie, and blinked at Archie's epigrams. Diggers addressed Hildegarde as if she was a person of consequence. How did Hildegarde feel this evening? Had she been quite well since they last met? Ought she to go out as much as she did?

"Going down to help Godfrey Tomlinson stir his last brew!" said Archie abruptly. And by way of revenge on Hildegarde for having a creature like Diggers on her list, he added:

"Miss Huckle's aunt never comes down until the *second* time she is called. Have Bishop order me a taxi, please, Hildegarde, and tell Jenks when he comes to call for me at Godfrey's. And *don't* do anything about your dividend until you hear from me!"

As Archie went out he met a telegraph boy coming in, and it seemed to

him that a lean figure skulked in a dark doorway across the street. Was the house already being watched? At Godfrey's he was temporarily diverted by watching his friend manipulate crocks, syphons and bottles. There were no more crocks to be had, Godfrey announced.

Meantime Mr. Diggers sat rapturously with Hildegarde in her drawing-room. It happened that he was the only man who had sincerely cared for Hildegarde.

Most women, fortunately, have a Mr. Diggers on their list; somebody who will always be content to stay faithful and worship from afar. Hildegarde would have been lonely without her Mr. Diggers. She met him during an enforced period of economy when, her popularity having temporarily waned, she had not been asked to visit all summer. Consequently she had gone with Aunt Hildegarde to a quiet, cheap hotel and promptly infatuated Mr. Diggers, who had come there to be alone and write a book.

The quiet, retiring scholar had fallen desperately in love with the brilliant being from another sphere. Hildegarde had trailed her scented, frivolous draperies into his innermost dreams for evermore. For years he had thought her the most bewitching woman that ever lived. The mere thought of her was ecstasy. It is restful to have a man in such a frame of mind about you, if you don't see too much of him, and Hildegarde took great comfort in Mr. Diggers' society when her own world proved too hollow a bauble.

After years of respectful, long-distance admiration, Mr. Diggers, by a strange coincidence, had selected this particular evening to inform Hildegarde that she was gracefully travelling a road that led nowhere, and that she ought to settle down and become Mrs. W. D. Diggers. It was only to-day that he had suddenly realized that if Hildegarde had been going to marry a lord or a money king she would have done it long ago. So he went through with his proposal.

"You want my cellar!" declared Hildegarde, when his set speech came to an end.

And nothing would convince her that Mr. Diggers wasn't as bad as the rest and that he hadn't got wind of her dividend. The only man whom she had thought disinterested was no better than the rest. Furthermore, for an unworldly writer of abstruse books, Mr. Diggers began to display an incongruous interest in knowing just what sort of wines and whiskies she had.

"You men are all alike. *All* mercenary!" said Hildegarde in a passion. Really, it was too much to have all the idols go crashing down at once. "I never want to see your face again, Mr. Diggers."

And Mr. W. D. Diggers, a little cowed, but with a grim, unconquerable light in his pale brown eyes, obediently retired from the beloved presence.

"They've both gone—*do* come down, Auntie!" called Hildegarde, tossing her proposals into the open fire.

Aunt Hildegarde, who was a faded version of Hildegarde, trailed down from her bedroom in a flame-coloured negligée. She was highly addicted to formless silken garments, and was so languid and willowy that she was more like a half-animated Liberty scarf than a creature of flesh and blood. She lived on salads.

"I've decided to empty out every drop of the dividend," said Hildegarde. "It would serve the crowd of schemers right. Although I enjoy a cocktail as well as anybody, I don't intend to be made a fool of because my cellar happens to be full of alcohol."

"Couldn't we somehow get loads of money for it, dear?"

"Not without breaking the law. This liquor business is all so petty that I think it would be wonderful gesture to throw it all away to-night."

And Hildegarde junior rang for the tireless Bishop.

"Bishop, have I forgotten, or is there a sort of sink in the back cellar?"

"It's still there, Miss Hildegarde."

"Hasn't rusted out or anything?"

"It had, but I soldered it up so that it works quite nicely."

"Which will make it convenient to empty out the stuff without carrying it over the stairs."

There being no one present but family, Hildegarde didn't waste her Jerusalem candlestick, and the three women felt their way down through the half-lit halls and stairs, and Bishop lighted a despairing little whistling gas-jet in the cellar. Soon the popping of corks resounded dismally, and bottle after bottle of the best champagne flowed away for ever down the cellar sink.

"Without even tasting any?" inquired Aunt Hildegarde at last.

"Of course we can taste it, but when there's so much it doesn't appeal to me."

Aunt Hildegarde poured some into a broken tumbler.

"In the matter of champagne, environment is everything," remarked Hildegarde, as she noticed that her aunt didn't finish the glass. "Another case of champagne, Bishop!"

After the second case the work grew monotonous, and Hildegarde said she was tired, and that they'd throw out the rest later, some evening when they felt energetic.

"If you'll just put out the bottles for the rubbish man to-morrow, Bishop," said Hildegarde on her way upstairs.

The canny Bishop said that a pile of empty champagne bottles in the yard might attract unwelcome attention from high places, and that the empty bottles had better be returned to the cellar shelves. And she placed them in a neat, festive row.

V

DURING the next three days Hildegarde had further opportunity to test the mettle of the men she knew. Telephone and doorbell rang all day, and special delivery letters and telegrams poured in. Every man Hildegarde had ever met wanted to take her to the theatre or else drop round for a cozy little call. Taxis rattled up to the door in the evenings, and at last Hildegarde said that the only thing to do was to go away and stay until the tumult and the shouting died.

So Bishop helped pack up, and the two Hildegardes stole away to the quiet hotel where they had met Mr. Diggers, finding it still quiet, but, alas! no longer cheap. Bishop was left on guard. She was not to give away their whereabouts or let a soul cross the threshold. It filled Bishop with delight to learn that the rules applied even to Mr. Neff.

The outraged Archie proved to be Bishop's chief problem. He came himself to try and worm Hildegarde's address from Bishop. He came, later in the same day, with Godfrey Tomlinson. He sent Pitts, but even Pitts couldn't pry Hildegarde's address from the sealed lips of Bishop.

One week of vegetating, however, was all that the Hildegardes could stand, and they stole hungrily back to town as soon as they learned from Bishop that things were quieting down.

It had rained during most of their week in the country, as it always does during weeks in the country, and it had rained in town, too, with the consequence that Archie Neff had nearly gone demented. As soon as Hildegarde telephoned to him things settled back into their old groove with the exception of the fact that Archie, in his desire for her cellar, got into the habit of proposing to Hildegarde every time they met. Had it not been for her cellar, which as yet she had not got round to throw away, Hildegarde might have accepted Archie in the hope of forgetting Mr. Diggers.

The longer Mr. Diggers stayed away the more Hildegarde came to realize how much she had depended on him. More than anything else she missed his letters, which had been well-phrased and more interesting to look at than the man himself. They were written on thin paper with the blackest of ink, in a sturdy, picturesque hand, and they were sealed with enormous red seals, on which was stamped the picture of an open mouse-trap with a mouse nibbling

a piece of cheese, and underneath the warning, "*Prenez garde.*"

Archie cherished no illusions about her being beautiful and sublime; Mr. Diggers had implied that she would always trail clouds of glory. Archie knew only too well that although Hildegarde was witty and full of life, and that she would perish sooner than become stale, her existence was not as colourful as it seemed, and that she was not a good catch and never had been, that she was *passée*, and that some people made fun of her, which was quite undeserved, because Hildegarde was brave and gallant, even if mistaken. Archie realized that with the passage of each day she grew less desirable—from the worldly point of view.

Mr. W. D. Diggers, on the other hand, had disclosed interesting vistas of another point of view, where two people who loved each other might find it contenting to grow old and mellow in a little garden of their own; a garden with a view, so that they might never feel shut in, or lose the sense of being a part of something too big and wonderful to understand. Yes, Mr. W. D. Diggers had made Hildegarde feel that even if her hair turned gray he would still love on. And now Mr. W. D. Diggers had vanished into the Unknown, about which, oddly, he seemed to know so much.

There was nothing left, apparently, therefore, but to play the social game to its very end, making the best of the poor hand she had drawn from Fate. Some day, possibly, she might weaken and marry Archie. About one thing only was she stanch; she refused to serve a drop of her dividend.

"I didn't dream your sex could be so silly!" she told Archie. "Men who go out to the country for golf now come back moaning about the acres of wasted dandelions which should be going into wine."

Just two months after Hildegarde returned from the quiet hotel, Archie informed Pitts, at dinner, that he expected to ask Miss Huckle to marry him that evening, and that she would this time accept. And before Pitts could say anything enigmatical, Archie fled.

"Pitts is prepared and expects it, so do say yes, and open up a bottle of *our* champagne," said Archie to Hildegarde later.

And Hildegarde, having given up all hope of Diggers, thinking he must be dead, and being worried about the price of luxuries, said:

"Oh, for heaven's sake, yes!"

Whereupon they both became aware that the doorbell had been ringing for some time and that no one was answering it.

"What *can* have happened to Bishop?" asked Hildegarde.

"Why don't you go to the door?" called Aunt Hildegarde, from above. "I'm not dressed—so *I* can't."

"*You* go, Archie, will you, please?"

"Certainly not. I hate answering doorbells, because, not knowing who it is, you always get a horrid start of surprise. Let 'em ring! It will be amusing to see how long they keep it up."

"Do *somebody* answer it before they exhaust the battery!" called down Aunt Hildegarde.

So Hildegarde, who was wearing the brown tulle and bronze bead, rattled unwillingly to the door, to be confronted by three men not in society, in the narrow sense.

"Good evening, Miss Huckle," said one, and they came on in without being invited.

"We are revenue officers," announced the most unattractive of the three, following her into the drawing-room.

As the three men marched into the room, Archie with difficulty restrained the first impulse he had had in years to hurry. Underneath all his fat and indolence he was something of a gentleman, so he puffed out his chest, adjusted his monocle, and tried to look like a severe lawyer whom he disliked.

"We'll keep everything nice and pleasant, Miss Huckle, if you will tell us whether we are right in thinking that

you have considerable liquor in your cellar."

"My cellar is more famous than I wish it were," said Hildegarde.

"I wonder if you will show us what you have."

"Certainly." And because it contributed to her sense of the picturesque, she lit the seven-branch Jerusalem candlestick.

"This way, gentlemen," she breathed.

As she started across a long bare space of floor all three revenue officers bent down to pick up the bronze bead, which they had taken for a boy's marble, unconnected with Hildegarde in any way. Consequently their three heads collided in a way that Archie had not believed humanly possible. There was really quite a report.

"If you are wondering about my taking the candles," said Hildegarde affably, "it's because I'm too poor to have electricity anywhere but on the drawing-room floor."

A silent procession followed her down the basement stairs, along the frayed linoleum and then down into the front cellar.

"Do you know what is in this barrel?" asked one of the men, touching it with his forefinger gently.

"The best Scotch I own!" replied Hildegarde.

Then followed the great moment.

The inspector hit the barrel a blow with his foot, and it resounded and reverberated in a way that was unmistakably hollow.

"Empty!" cried Archie.

"Empty!" echoed Hildegarde.

It was true.

They tapped all the barrels with the same result; the bottles, with the exception of those that Hildegarde had emptied, had vanished. Nothing remained of the wonderful cellar but two wicker-trimmed bottles of Chianti.

"Evidently, ma'am," said one of the officers, "you are not a party to the disappearance."

"No, but—" Hildegarde stopped just in time to avoid implicating Bishop.

"I always said Bishop was too good to be true," interrupted Archie too readily to sound disinterested. "And by the way, Hildegarde, where *can* Bishop be?"

"I'm afraid we'll have to hunt round for Bishop a little." And the three revenue officers tramped over every inch of Hildegarde's neat but threadbare domicile, and no Bishop could they find.

VI

"Well, Archie," said Hildegarde, when they had gone, "I believe I had just said yes, and that is your cue to ask me to name the day."

"It was my impression that the engagement automatically ended with the disappearance of your dividend." Archie didn't say it aloud, but he might just as well, for it was so obviously in his mind.

"Unless, of course, you were marrying me for my cellar," continued Hildegarde, pretending to be obtuse.

"Don't say *that!* Where'll we have the ceremony? And don't forget to sit right down and tell the Schuylers, because they give such wonderful wedding presents." How could he get out of it in the quickest way?

"Don't look so uncomfortable, Archie, because I haven't the slightest intention of holding you to it. For years you have taken me about and entertained me, and there have been one or two moments when I half-fancied myself in love with you. But I'm losing my interest in shams—not that you are one—and I'm through with earrings and bronze beads—"

"And booze!"

"And booze and Bishop!"

"Excuse me, Miss Huckle, but I haven't really gone," came the well-known tones from the hall. And Bishop came in smiling. "Seeing the officers from my window, I stepped out of the scuttle over the roofs for a bit."

"Yes, Bishop!" said Archie exultantly. The gods were good. At last he had something on Bishop. "But

where are the Chiantis, Moselles, clarets, and champagnes?"

"Safe, sir."

"Safe *where?*"

"Never mind where, Mr. Neff."

"But you know, Bishop?"

"Oh, yes, I *know*."

And in not telling and in looking Archie straight in the eye as she refused, Bishop regained her ascendancy over him, just as the doorbell rang again.

"Those three meddling men have come back," said Archie fearfully. "Hide yourself, Bishop, and I'll tiptoe to the door and peek out the little side curtains."

When Archie returned his face was beaming with delight.

"It's that Diggers person. Nobody wants to see *him*, so I didn't open the door."

"Mr. Diggers?" Hildegarde fairly ran to admit him.

"Are you at home this evening, Miss Huckle?" And in came Mr. W. D. Diggers, looking worse and dearer than ever.

"You remember Mr. Neff, of course," said Hildegarde, trying to conceal the fact that she was tremulous with delight.

Oh, yes, Mr. Diggers remembered Mr. Neff perfectly, and seemed to feel so much at ease that Archie got out his monocle and stared at the forward fellow.

"What do you think, Mr. Diggers?" he said loftily. "Miss Huckle has been robbed of her entire cellar, and *I* was cross-examining Bishop."

"Don't waste your breath!" said Mr. Diggers briefly. And he handed Hildegarde a long, cream-coloured envelope which proved to contain so large a cheque that she thought he was putting up a joke on her. "I took the liberty of selling your cellar, Miss Huckle, and that is the money."

"But how and when?" asked the delighted Hildegarde.

"I at once foresaw trouble when I heard about your dividend, and I decided to take things into my own hands. I have been here at all times of the day and night, and carried it away personally, and right here I want to say that Bishop has been splendid."

"If I hadn't known you were going to throw it away, Miss Huckle, I never would have let him in the basement door," apologized Bishop.

"It's only in line with your wonderful efficiency, Bishop," said Hildegarde. "But isn't it against the law to sell alcoholic beverages, Mr. Diggers?"

"Ordinarily. But the hotel paid you in liquor instead of money before the dry laws went fully into effect. And I am just a little hazy as to the dates on which I disposed of it."

"Who was the purchaser?" inquired Archie Neff stiffly. "Yourself?"

"Do I look as if I would invest a small fortune in vile alcohol?"

"No, you don't. And so I repeat, who bought it?"

"Ah!" said Mr. Diggers. "*That* is the interesting part."

Hildegarde was reduced to speechless admiration. When she had rated him a deserter, here he had been serving her at all hours of the day and night. His devotion was sublime. It was too bad that he wasn't better-looking!

"Why don't you ask the man where the stuff went to?" prodded Archie. "Don't *you* wonder where it went, Hildegarde?"

"It went where it will do no harm," said Mr. Diggers.

"You don't mean you sold it to a philanthropic fool who poured it out?"

"Oh, no, far from it. Every drop will be consumed, and yet the world will go on without any ill effects from Miss Hildegarde Huckle's dividend."

"If you don't mind, I wish you *would* tell Mr. Neff," said Hildegarde. "It doesn't agree with him not to have his curiosity satisfied."

"Certainly, Miss Huckle. It's rather amusing, with Mr. Neff's being so very curious about it, to think that all the time it is reposing in his own cellar."

Incredulity chained Archie's lips.

"I sold it to Pitts," continued Mr. W. D. Diggers, "and he expects to make quite a bit when he sells it to you."

"Good old Pittsy!" said Archie, almost with reverence.

"And those weren't revenue officers, either," added Mr. Diggers. "They were three old friends of Pitts' who used to be on the police force."

"But why this feverish activity on the part of the staid Pitts?" inquired Hildegarde.

"Excuse me, Miss Hildegarde," said Bishop, "but Pitts didn't want Mr. Archie to marry you any more than I want you to marry Mr. Archie."

"I never *heard* of such wholesale impertinence!" said Archie. "Is anybody speaking to anybody else?"

"I'm still speaking to Miss Huckle," announced Mr. Diggers, with a look in his eyes that was romantic enough to suit anybody. "Will you marry me, Hildegarde?"

"Yes."

"Select it yourself—the handsome wedding present, I mean," said Archie. "Make it anything you like, Hildegarde, diamonds or pearls. That is, unless Mr. Diggers objects."

"Not at all, my *dear* Mr. Neff!"

"Well, then, everybody's happy," said Archie delightedly. "You have Hildegarde and I have her cellar. Who says that three's a crowd?"

ECHO

By A. Newberry Choyce

THAT night in April when you came and stood
  Bare-throated, oh sweet dearest! in the rain,
And one pink-breasted chaffinch made the wood
  Mystic and murmurous with his piping pain. . . .

I could have taken you . . . God told me so;
  His minstrel sang it from the moon-kissed tree;
But then I was too wise to have you know,
  And then you were too proud to have me see.

Let us go back again, we two that lied,
  And tell the little pink-breast we were wrong;
That I have tired of wisdom, you of pride.
  But what if he have wearied of his song? . . .

THE WAY OF IT

By Lawrance Vail

I

NURSE asked him for a kiss, but he shook his head with some solemnity, for his mouth was full of chocolate.

She said to him: "I'll give you a chocolate for each kiss."

This was matter for grave reflection.

He kissed her many, many times.

Kissing, he reflected, was rather boring; chocolate, on the other hand, was lovely.

That evening nurse said to mother: "Master Ralph is very clever. He can count up to fifty-seven."

"Of course he is wonderful," answered mother.

That night he had indigestion. Of course it was wonderful indigestion.

II

RALPH led her to a corner of the garden.

"It's done like this," he said. A pinker spot appeared on her pink cheek. "What do you think of it?"

She pondered for a moment.

"I like it!" she said gravely. And then, with admiration: "Oh, Ralph! Where did you learn?"

"I know a lot of other things!" he uttered off-handedly. He felt very proud till he met Mark next morning.

"Kissing is silly!" said Mark. "But women like it."

And Ralph replied, blushing thickly: "Of course kissing is very silly."

III

"OH! You are very beautiful," he murmured. "You are like a beautiful white rose!"

She sighed and quivered prettily.

"Oh, Ralph! How wonderfully you speak!"

"You are my beautiful white rose!"

"Ralph! Do you really mean it!"

How could she ask. That night he wrote a poem.

IV

SHE used to tell herself that she felt motherly towards him.

"One more!" he begged of her. "One more!"

She said to him: "You must really learn to do it more quietly. My husband . . ."

Anger blazed in his eyes. "The hound," he thought, "the brute! By what right does she belong to him?" But he merely sighed and said:

"Why did I not know you five years ago!"

She corrected him very gently: "You mean fifteen years ago."

V

BUT he had not listened to her. The world was badly managed. Couples were ill-assorted.

A pity it was, indeed, that he had not leapt from the perambulator and dragged her from the altar steps.

And that night, while she slept deeply, dreamlessly, he studied time tables and the Divorce Law, and he was very angry with himself, thought himself unworthy of her, because he fell asleep at daybreak.

She murmured wistfully: "You love me! Oh! I am glad to be yours for ever."

He shifted his eyes from her face.

How moved he was! she thought.

"For ever, darling! Did you hear?"

He bent towards her. She could not see him when he kissed her.

And that night, while her happiness kept her eyes from closing, while the vision of him filled her with such gentle rapture . . . he packed his trunk.

VI

THEY had been married for two years.

"Do you love me as much as yesterday?" she asked. "You have not kissed me since this morning!"

He walked across the room and kissed her.

"One more!" she begged.

One kiss, he knew, meant twenty kisses, and so he pleaded labour.

But when he was alone he did not work. He thought of Smith and Jones and Brown, and the good times they had had together. He thought, too, of a friendly, buxom Mabel, who used to glance at him so provokingly as she passed his beer across the counter.

VII

HE used to pay her gallant, old-fashioned compliments as she helped him on with his overcoat.

"How can you," he said to her as he held her hand, "care at all for an old man like me?"

"You are not old!" she answered.

"But there are younger!"

"They are so silly!"

He had never felt so spry for many years as he walked out into the street. He bought a gardenia for his buttonhole.

One day he caught a glance between her and one of these silly men.

He never allowed her to help him on with his overcoat again.

VIII

EVERY night she sang a little song and danced a little dance. For eleven nights he looked at her singing her little song and dancing her little dance. Then he asked her out to supper.

He said to her after their first bottle of champagne: "I love you, Frou-Frou darling!"

"I love you too!" she replied, and threw two round arms around his neck.

Ah! It was splendid to be loved! She loved him more than she loved the baron; aye, more than she loved the baron's son; aye, still greater wonder, more than she loved the baron's grandson. He promised her roses, a set of furs, a motor car, a diamond necklace, also to love her for ever. Once more she threw her two white arms around his neck.

One day he brought her roses, promising, for other days, the set of furs, the motor car, the diamond necklace. And again she threw her two soft arms around his neck.

Another day he brought her roses, but forgot to promise the set of furs, the motor car, the diamond necklace. He remembered, however, to promise to love her for ever and for ever. But she forgot to throw her two round, white, soft arms around his neck.

Every night she sang a little song and danced a little dance. But he was no longer among those who saw her sing her little song and dance her little dance.

IX

HIS daughter used to ask him to lunch every Sunday, but he never came more often than once a month, for it disgusted him to see her baby slobber.

One afternoon he was awakened from his nap by a series of excruciating yells which came from the nursery. He found it—a scarlet lump of pulpy flesh done up in white rags, squealing alone on the floor. He felt strangely helpless but thought it his duty to make silly faces to keep it from exploding.

He discovered, to his utter bewilderment, that it smiled when you dandled it. He discovered, too, that it amused him to see it smile.

His daughter thought now that he came to lunch too often.

THE LITTLE FIGURE IN THE ENORMOUS TAPESTRY

By Stephen Ta Van

CHAPTER I

"IF there's any chance of Wycoff talking about the war," said my friend, George Warren, "I won't stay. I appreciate his character, bravery, talent, social standing, and good looks, but—I have an appointment elsewhere. I won't be here. Not if the war is to be his topic. That lets me out, that war stuff."

He had dropped in casually at my room overlooking Gramercy Square, and I had told him that a mutual friend, lately discharged from the Army, was due in a half-hour.

"I don't think Wycoff will talk war," I said. "Probably he's sick to death of it by now. Most of them are."

"I could stand it," the earnest George went on as if I had not spoken, "if they'd tell their little stories and then stop. You remember old Colonel Wells, one of the eight or fourteen thousand who escaped from Libby Prison through that famous tunnel? He used to tell about it whenever the girls had guests—each time a little differently, toward the last—and it was a pleasant part of the meal. Nobody minded it. The old man himself didn't expect you to get all worked up over it. You had it with the coffee, like a liqueur. But these new birds, these veterans of *this* war, they all insist on proving something. They're hell-bent to prove that some division won the war, or that somebody in particular was to blame for the inefficiency. And they want all listeners to agree—which rouses my natural heat. I'll say I don't care much who did the winning, or whether the Q. M. C. or the Ordnance got the least dirt under its nails, and I've almost reached the point where I won't care who was to blame."

"Well, I guess that settles it," I said.

But George rarely leaves a subject until he has subdued it.

"Listen," he said. "You were there. You were only a trick soldier, but you were there. You ought to know. Wasn't there any part of this war that could be told about without preaching a sermon, or playing oompah! oompah! on the heroic slide trombone, or pulling this heavy vodeveel humour? Didn't anybody ever act human? Or is it that they can't be human when they talk or write about it? Some of the correspondents may be all right. Their stuff is what you might call competent, I suppose. But they have this arguing habit, too, and as for the common or garden lecturer, the bird who just starts off without provocation and keeps going, he doesn't reach me at all. What he says is only a noise. I don't get an impression."

"That's why so many of the good ones don't like to talk," I said. "They know they can't get it across, can't make you understand."

"Why can't they?" he persisted. "Why can't they, if they were there? Was it too big for them? Is that it?"

"Sometimes it was too big for them, or it came in too much of a bunch. There was no perspective. But mostly they got it, or a part of it, and it has

faded. You know how an over-exposed plate acts when you develop it? The image jumps out at you and is gone. Well, this is like that. It slips away from them, and at first they're sore, and then they're puzzled, and then they shut up. What they remember seems too fantastic for belief. It gets to be like a dream, something out of another life. In reality it was distorted enough, and the change of scene makes it seem doubly so. How could they hope to make you see it as it was, when they themselves are doubtful of its meaning?"

After my friends had gone—without further mention of the war—I wondered if my analysis had been based on too narrow an observation. My own distaste for promiscuous war talk would be a weak test, for my privilege is limited. My year in war-time France was spent as one of the heroic half-million whose valour was confined to the Service of the Rear. Barring a couple of nights in the submarine zone, a few air raids in Paris, and that troublesome week in May, 1918, when it was abruptly borne in on Americans in France that if the French Army line broke they would have to swim the Atlantic for their lives, I was in less danger than I might have faced on wild Broadway.

I seem to be in accord, however, with more authentic veterans. Friends whose experience included service at the front—Wycoff and others—are even less talkative; and men I meet, whom I knew on the other side, avoid the subject. In the paddock at Havre de Grace I knocked elbows by chance with a boy beside whom I worked for two months at St. Nazaire. His closest approach to war discussion was a refusal to bet on War Mask, on the ground that the name of the horse was a jinx. An ex-doughboy who really did some fighting, and who now marks shipping-cases for a firm in Thirty-seventh Street, mentions the war only casually, with a passing bitterness, in some such stereotyped comment as "Say lagair!"—the A. E. F. version of the catch-phrase which, during the early part of the American occupation of Middle France, came to have so wide a connotation, because it could be used by people of both nations, either sincerely as an explanation, or with tongue in cheek.

It has not been my fortune to meet the lecturers. But despite time and distortion, the war remains alive in the background of the mind, and semi-occasionally a speech slips out, or an incident occurs, that is like a hand on a cord pulling back a curtain. The curtain slides, and presto! one sees the low gray sky over France, and senses again the spirit of a land upon which wholesale catastrophe descended, with its uncanny train of grotesque, heroic, and degrading reactions, changing many accepted values in an existence where regard for life decreased as familiarity with death grew.

CHAPTER II

One noon at Claxon's food palace, whither Fleurette and I had gone for lunch, I saw at an opposite table a familiar face, without a corresponding name. Not until the young Jew spoke, with an apology, did I recognize him in civilian clothes as the mail orderly of a signal unit that was stationed at Tours when I was there. For weeks I had seen him in uniform every morning.

I stopped, and some commonplaces passed between us. He told me that he was in Silk, and I gave him my business card.

While we talked, his gaze followed Fleurette persistently. In that there was nothing unusual, for she is a conscious magnet for eyes; but suddenly, remembering by an inspiration the circumstances in which he might have seen me last, I caught his thought, as sharply as if he had defined it for me in letters a foot high. The hat, fairly screaming with scarlet, that Fleurette happened to be wearing was reminiscent of Emilienne's, and the thought leaping from a mass of memories that Levy had no time to separate, was:

"The Red Hat at Tours!"

While I waited to redeem my property from the coatroom bandit, scene after scene returned, and before I parted ten minutes later from a piqued Fleurette, I was in the grip of a nostalgia that called me back irresistibly to the gray-and-green town between the shallow, rushing rivers. I saw the familiar streets with quaint names; the high house of Madame Lesage, protectress of *les enfants Serbes*, one of whom was so tall as scarcely to need protection; and the little café behind the station, where Suzanne and her sister practised adolescent wiles by flickering candle light, while their sullen parent served Vouvray for double prices after closing time.

Again I worked fourteen hours a day with Buddy Hamill and his cousin Dave, inimitable author of the celebrated aphorism involving the noise made by seven blind horses crossing a wooden bridge. I heard Germaine Lubin, brought down from Paris for the American trade, sing her flashing Tosca at the Opera, and little Madame Cinquante count off the breakfast change in the sing-song that earned her her nickname. In the chill medieval dusk of the cathedral I passed the mourners—those figures in black, with pale, haunted faces, that seemed no longer to be women old or young, but ageless symbols of sorrow.

And as in memory I turned to enter the Café de Commerce, I met face to face Emilienne, who was sometimes called the Red Hat, and whose story seems to me to carry an echo of the stupendous commingling of tragedy, romance, and farce—a marriage of Gargantua with Snow White, to the music of Bach played by a combination of a million drunken village bands—which was the war.

CHAPTER III

I FIRST saw Emilienne, in fact, at the Pension Bourgeois Lefebvre, which I discovered by accident. It was in September, 1917, before the historic invasion of Tours by the American Services of Supply.

I had been sent down from Paris to establish an Army post-office. There were only half a dozen units in the district—the aviation squadrons at Instruction Field Number Two, a few miles to the north of the city; a telegraph battalion; the salvage crew; a company of infantry; and a detail of Marines on M. P. duty. A room for the office had been hired in the Hôtel de Bordeaux. I hung out the flag and began business with two packing-cases, a letter-scale, and an iron safe about the size of a cat-basket, begged from the post quartermaster.

There was little to do. Once a day the Paris mail came in and was sorted with the help of orderlies detailed from the various units. A few money orders were written; and in the afternoon I visited the French post-office to bicker mildly with the curious and voluble young woman in charge of *recommandés*, since registered mail supplied at all times a fruitful ground for argument.

I was glad enough of a respite, for I had worked long and hard at Paris, and at the purgatory of wind-swept docks called St. Nazaire—from which I think nothing good has ever come except the famous ballad; and that, alas! is unprintable on parlour pages. Tours, with its rest and quiet, was a welcome harbour. The people were friendly; they had not seen many Americans then. Prices were comparatively low; the food was better than it had been in the North; the girls smiled. The mind lapsed into a semi-lethargy, and only now and then—when one noticed the extraordinary care lavished on the children, or saw the hopeless women in black in the churches—did realization of the war awake.

In such circumstances friendships were easily formed. There was Mademoiselle de Lille, odd little old maid of good family, continually complaining and as regularly performing good works. She was the chief support of the school at St. Symphorien for

blessés: the blind, who were as patient as God, and the pathetic but ridiculous deaf, who were sometimes as irritable as the devil. They made innumerable brushes of all conceivable kinds, poor souls, and every friend of Mademoiselle came to be well supplied. She had a penchant for introductions; through her I met French people, among them the young soldier Fernand Loriot, with whom I spent many evenings. His family had been in trade in Tours for generations, and he himself was at home on sick leave. He had just finished three years of service in Indo-China, much of it without white companions, among savages so bestial that he was obliged to train dogs to guard him against them while he slept.

The poison of the fever-haunted country was still in him, and his attitude toward the coming call to his regiment was that of a fatalist. Often he and I played chess through an evening at the Grand Café, to which came night after night the same Frenchmen—the hunch-backed dwarf, his epileptic friend Redbeard, and others exempt from military service—to sit gravely, with a grotesque importance lent by their mingled shame and relief for their own unfitness, beneath the tall mirrors that formed the walls, while from a central coign of vantage at the caisse Madame and her husband, resembling each other and great Chinese dolls, looked down without visible emotion upon a scene that one might say had existed in the family for a century.

Or I dined with the lieutenant of Marines, a magnetic Californian, and went afterward to the Café de Commerce, where one watched the cinema from either side of a screen hung across the centre of the long room; or to the Alhambra, home of a typical revue, built around *commère* and *compère*, and including as a minor character the stock American in a campaign hat, who followed the women about the stage on his knees, and was duly scorned and then beaten by several Frenchmen before the piece ended.

Already the lines of caste, laughable yet significant as applied to an army of Americans, were appearing in the town life The Café de Commerce retained a degree of social tone; an officer might appear there without invoking caste trouble. The Café de la Ville, a little below it on the Rue Nationale, was a refuge for common soldiery, and there the enlisted men lolled without interference during such hours as the provost's regulations allowed. Later, when the town was swamped in a sea of troops, it was hard to find a vacant chair in the wide room, dim with smoke, where cheap scents and the odours of spilled wine combined to give the atmosphere the weight of a fog.

These were resorts of which everyone learned after a day or two. Sometimes it was pleasant to hunt food or adventure farther afield. I stumbled upon the Pension Lefebvre while wandering at random in search of a quiet place in which to dine. I had walked out the Rue de l'Alma as far as those neat public gardens where every season, through war and peace, the swans hatch and rear their annual brood of cygnets on the ornamental lake. There I had turned, right and left, and found myself facing one of the brown fronts, featuring two narrow show-windows and a sign around a door, by means of which the French give to a converted dwelling the appearance of a shop. The door opened immediately, with bell accompaniment, into a room containing six small tables and a chimney-piece. A thin girl in black came forward. I asked if I might have dinner, and was forthwith served with the first of a series of the best meals in France.

CHAPTER IV

EMILIENNE was in the room on my third or fourth visit. She drew attention instantly, because she was light blonde in a country where twenty-eight out of every thirty women are definitely dark, and because it was evident that she was supremely happy. Positive

happiness is always interesting, and this girl, blonde as the corn, fairly radiated pleasure and affection.

She sat at the corner table beyond the chimney, laughing into the light from the front of the room. Of her companions, who sat with their backs towards the door, one wore the *bleu d'horizon*, the other the close-fitting black tunic and bright red trousers of the most striking of the French uniforms.

The first I did not know. When the second turned his head I saw that he was Raymond de Trévières, the young aviator whose life was a romantic drama, and whose reputation was already entering the legendary stage into which those of the aces headed by Guynemer and Nungesser had passed.

I had already met him in the post-office, to which he came in no poetic humour to complain of a delayed letter. He was on temporary instruction duty at the American field, he explained, and his mail should have been delivered there, not sent to the French office. His ill-temper faded as he stood talking easily in accurate English, and the magnetism of his buoyant personality, which at first glance had seemed effeminate, made itself felt.

He was scarcely twenty-three, and, in addition to youth, possessed fame, health, breeding, good looks, the respect of men, the love of women, and enough wit to appreciate his unusual good fortune. One could envy him without malice, for though the inevitable cruelty of success was in him, he was essentially unspoiled.

Romance hung about him like a shining cloak. He was the ideal laughing adventurer, a type between the fanatical paladin Nungesser and the exponent of super-efficiency René Fonck. If he could have chosen among a thousand generations, he could not have selected one more suitable to his desire. If he lived a hundred years, it would be impossible for him with his equipment to discover a greater intensity of life than he was already experiencing. If he died on his next flight, he would go out at the height of his effort, a young man beloved of the elder gods.

He recognized me and nodded, smiling, then turned back to his friends; and for some time the three lingered over their coffee, in a pleasant intimacy. Obviously the girl was De Trévières's. His eyes met hers, they laughed together, with her laughter echoing his, and often her hand touched his across the table.

Theirs was a lilting love, sung to the magical music of a pipe played by a son of Pan, and inaudible to other ears than Youth's. It seemed as natural and spontaneous as the flow of a stream, and would in an ordinary year have been merely a pretty and touching relationship, to be observed idly and philosophized about with a gaudy phrase. But here one caught in the gaiety of the girl, sincere and positive though it was, something febrile, sinister: an undernote of superstitious fear, the sense of an unfair Fate, that sounds a knell in little intellects in times of widespread calamity. Feeling that her happiness might be snatched from her at any moment, she clung to it breathlessly, and one could guess the struggle to hold at arm's length the dread:

"The next time, he may not return!"

They made a peak of colour in the dining-room, standing out against a background formed by the duller personalities of a clientele of harmless folk: the middle-aged lawyer, square of forehead, beard, and shoes, wearing the dark-blue costume of the French non-combatant in military service; his tiny, bandy-legged friend, supporter of a preposterously long and bulbous nose, and moustaches to match; the modest produce merchant, who suddenly unmasked in his corner, when his meal was served, a battery of uncouth antics and explosions; and the self-styled countess of a certain age, whose face was so thin that she had only a profile, and who was unique in her ability simultaneously to eat soup, smoke a cigarette, and weep copiously in two languages.

These good people appeared at the door so regularly, with the inevitable

scrape and bow, that one expected invisible machinery to squeak "Cuckoo! Cuckoo!" but De Trévières and his Emilienne came only occasionally.

I dined with them several times, and found the girl pleasant but indifferent. The shallow vessel of her mind was filled with her lover to the brim. She liked to sit and look at him silently with her large eyes of the slaty horizon-blue of the French uniform, set a little too far apart for perfect proportion, and holding behind their happiness the ever-present shadow of her fear. Usually she touched his hand, or the sleeve of his coat. His reactions were quick and kind, but he was more the aviator than the lover, and his thoughts were held by the greater adventure. However spontaneous a love-affair may seem, in an analysis it is found that there is one who gives and one who receives. Of this pair, so attractive, so passionately attached, the man, who was the younger, was also the less in love; and in proportion to his independence, he held in thrall the imagination of the girl.

A life of fiery activity, De Trévières', and his time in Tours proved short. In defiance of some restriction that irked him, he flew his plane between the stone towers of the cathedral, with only a few feet of clearance. Thereafter, stunting above the city was curtailed, and when the planes passed over from the Field, they were at a high altitude, resembling, as they slid down the wind, huge geese in formation to fly south.

The young aviator, with his quick smile and easy, accurate English, was detailed for other duty. Someone reported, after a time, that he had been sent to the front.

CHAPTER V

It was about that time—in December—that rumours reached us of the approaching descent from Paris of the Lines of Communication, to be rechristened Service of the Rear, and later the Service of Supplies. We paid little attention to them, because rumours were as unreliable as they were frequent; and when, virtually without warning, the avalanche rolled down, scant preparation had been made for handling the immense volume of additional mail matter involved.

A working force was sent down from Paris, but equipment and correctly trained help were lacking; there could be no control of traffic, which was over French lines; and changes within the A. E. F. were coming with a speed too bewildering to permit an approach to accuracy. From the time of the arrival of the various headquarters, to the last of my direct knowledge of the situation, the problem of delivery of mail at Tours, as at other large American offices in France, was a struggle against odds that were almost prohibitive against those who handled the mail as well as those who, cut off from home, awaited with what patience they could muster news of the illness of a mother or the birth of a child.

In the new office, born a garage, at the corner of the Rue Georges Sand and the Rue Victor Hugo, the force reduced piles of mail with little rest. The concrete floor was an inch under water when we moved in, and did not dry out completely until summer heat had cooked the low, flat building like a waffle; but the place was not a bad one for work. There was plenty of room. The little French boys and old men who carried on the woodworking industry built racks and counters, fitting and filing like jewellers to avoid waste, and from case to rack we moved hour after hour in the peculiar chalky glare admitted by the skylights, striving as persistently as machines to get to the bottom of the heaps of sacks and pouches that kept piling up. When we escaped for a breathing space from the dust we were dizzy, and deep and joyous were the inroads, in the café of Madame Cinquante across the Rue Georges Sand, on the Vouvray, sparkling alleviator of the woes of man, unfortunately unknown in its native vigour on this side of the Atlantic.

It must be admitted that our allies,

after the first shock, received the invasion gracefully. They had their choice between withdrawal while the barbarians raged and remaining to derive profit from the onslaught. Having chosen the latter course, they followed it faithfully, as befitted an intelligent populace trained to trade and badly pinched financially. Often I talked the leaping prices over cheerfully with Mesdames Cinquante and Lefebvre, and reasonably with the lame tailor's wife, who ran her husband's business with a steady brain, though she had nightly visits from her son, whose mortal body had been blown, mere scattered refuse, over a slope of the Chemin des Dames. They commanded respect, those hard-headed Frenchwomen, and many a pleasant hour was passed in their shops and restaurants, in admiration of their canniness, and in interpretation for my countrymen, who would often have fared better commercially with a trifling exercise of tact.

But there was no more wandering about the city of an afternoon, with Marcel, the landlady's son, to see the dwelling which, having a dungeon, may have been that of Tristan l'Hermite, and the crooked passages in the old town, and bits of the ancient city wall, described by Marcel, a Book of Knowledge in English as well as French at sixteen, as very meritorious specimens of the almost-Gothic. No more idling along the river bank of a bright Sunday, while the painted girls drove by, four to a foolish open carriage, on their weekly excursion to the country-edge and back again. No more diversion, in fact, by daylight; and when we had stopped at night, and wolfed our dinner, we were either feverish or in a semi-stupor.

Tours itself—*la jolie ville, très interessante*—was half spoiled for one who loved its life. Wherever one went, our willing militia was there, all feet and language. In the midst of that old and charming foreign city, established in its ways, we were developing our discipline and the caste régime, with serio-comic birth-pangs. If the street between passing officer and enlisted man were twenty-seven feet wide, the enlisted man saluted; if thirty-one, he was rather grudgingly excused. The clever Marines had gone, and inexperienced M. P.'s, with improper instructions or none, infested the ways and byways. Mine was one of the original, priceless, all-night passes, signed by the Great Major himself; but frequently I had trouble to prevent myself from being hailed to the hoosegow by minions as savage and obstinate as some of the municipal police at home.

Even the Pension Lefebvre became corrupted. The pallid clientele—the produce merchant, the weeping countess, and Little-Man-Outweighed-by-His-Own-Moustaches—fled in a panic before the trampling charge of food-mad Brobdignagians, who seemed about to carry in the doorway on their shoulders when they entered, and whose knees came up through the tables as they spiked the chairs with their spurs. They ate everything that could be found, clamoured for more, and in cheery playfulness tossed to the ceiling the child of the house, transfixed with dangerous ecstasy. Shall I ever forget Jeanne, the frail little waitress, who finally weakened, and went home to some obscure village to complete her nervous prostration in peace? She did not say anything—not even "*C'est la Guerre!*"—but made a wonderful gesture with her thin hands before she went, and tried to speak, but could not, and made the gesture again. One read in the motion her otherwise inexpressible amazement, her stupefaction, at the behaviour of beings incomprehensible to a mind brought up in Carcassonne. So Gulliver must have felt when the foot of the gigantic farmer loomed above him in the furrow—except in Jeanne's case it was evident that the foot had descended.

Gradually, however, the flair of the Ordnance and Quartermaster officers for the pension abated. After all, it was not so lively as the Café Central, and frankly I believe that Madame's limit of endurance had been reached,

and she starved them out. One by one the members of the original clientele crept timorously back, like householders after an earthquake. The preposterous countess plucked up courage again to weep into her soup, and occasionally in his corner the produce merchant exploded uncouth gurglings as before, though his spirit as an artist remained depleted.

Blonde Emilienne was not one of those who returned. Indeed, she was seen but a few times at the pension after her lover's departure. Twice or thrice she came with the mutual friend, and once or twice alone; and the story was heard that the friend had attempted to annex her, and had been rebuffed. Then she was seen in the Rue Faidherbes, airing two cocker spaniels on a leash, and noticed for that reason by Bud Hamill's cousin Dave; for (said David) the cockers were the only dogs to be seen in France, except police dogs of German descent, that belonged to less than twenty breeds apiece.

Then for some weeks before and after De Trévières's death she was not seen at all, and almost disappeared from our memories.

By that time, under pressure of the military situation, events were crowding fast and feelings were growing calloused. The war-plot thickened for Americans. The Germans were launched on their drive, and there was activity even in the Service of the Rear. The restlessness, uncertainty, and lack of stability and standards affected the nerves. One got to know a chance comrade better in a week than one could know a friend ordinarily in a lifetime; and the next week one heard that he was dead, or had been sent to Toul or Issoudun, and other strangers became as intimately known in his place. It was continual impressionism, with distortion of values. A murder was trivial, and the loss of the last cigarette of a package a tragedy. Out-of-sight was likely to be out-of-mind, and Emilienne was merely one of a horde of shadows.

CHAPTER VI

A VALID romance clung to De Trévières in the manner of his death, as it had throughout his life.

His plane was shot down in flames by two Fokkers, in combat as spectacular as a description in a newspaper or a school history, and the gay adventurer found the end toward which he was undoubtedly as indifferent, without pose or sentimentality, as a young and brilliant man may be. To know him was a privilege.

He was a flower of the European civilization at the refinement of which—be the nationality French, British, or Italian—we in America may not arrive for another century at least. His distinction lay less in his intelligence or bravery than in his poise, which was more than half traditional. He possessed too much ancestral experience to take anything too seriously, or to fail to take seriously enough certain axioms which seem minor ones to some of us. Naturally and sincerely he preferred death to disfigurement or tedium, and might have been capable of crime but never awkwardness. There were many of his kind, but more completely than any other that I met he was the Happy Warrior, fortunate even in the glamour of his exit.

When he was killed I think we in the office were fighting an especially atrocious distribution-list and breaking in some particularly inexperienced clerks. The period is a hazy one in the memory, and I cannot remember accurately how long it was before Emilienne made her extraordinary reappearance. Bud Hamill, our best man, had been transferred to an office near the British front, and Paris was threatening to kill Bill Orme. Paris could have had old Judd, our assistant superintendent, without a quiver of resistance. The only benefit we ever derived from him was my joy in watching the well-meaning landlady, at my instigation, strive in the manner of 1812 to break up his influenza by tormenting his stringy back with twenty little glass vacuum cups,

each of which raised a lump like a purple plum on the aged flesh. I was working double hours, and bracing myself with the forbidden cognac. Trainor, the superintendent, called me to order, mentioning religious politics and personal feeling, and relations between us were strained. We all missed Hamill's work and sense of humour, and Dave Lay, his bereft cousin, was desolate.

Lay was the one who, by way of diversion, brought news of Émilienne. To disperse his sorrows he had sought society along the Rue Nationale, and interrupted his whistling over his rack the next morning to ask rhetorically:

"Who do you think I saw last night at the Commerce?"

"You tell us," said someone.

"The girl we used to see at the little pension—the Frog airman's girl, the one with the yellow hair."

"What of it?" I asked, to help him along.

"Well, she had on her Easter raiment, and the biggest, brightest red hat you ever saw, and she was with that Major Robinson, the Q. M. C. one."

"What about it, again?" Crab Cairns asked, prodding.

"Well, I call it crowding the mourners a little, don't you?" Dave said. "The funeral baked meats do coldly furnish forth the marriage tables, Cairnsy, old pin, and all that sort of thing, you know."

"Which Robinson was it?" Bill Orme asked. "The Q. M. C. is shot full of 'em."

"The fat, sloppy, peevish one. The one who hates himself so much he can't keep the buttons on his blouse, for swelling up. You can't miss him."

"What's the difference?" Cairns growled. "They're all crooks, and these French Janes are poison. It's good enough for both of them."

"Oh, give her a chance!" said Orme, who loathed the grouch. "It's simple enough. She's hard up, poor devil, or lonely. Why should she stay shut up in a dark room with a ghost if she don't feel like it?"

"Have it your own way. *Say lagair*," Dave said.

At this point Trainor appeared with a fresh batch of conflicting instructions, and social talk was suspended.

I saw Emilienne several times at the Café de Commerce, to which I still sometimes gravitated in the evening. She seemed to confine herself to Robinson, a noisy person who gave the impression of pushing his major's leaves into the face of every passer-by who did not outrank him. Aside from her hat, which flamed like a red torch, and an odd sort of glitter in the look she gave in answer to a greeting, she was apparently unchanged. She had as little to say as before, and, of course, it was not for me to tarry, with Robinson on guard.

Indeed, I felt little interest in her and of my own initiative would not have seen her again except as a casual figure in the middle distance. Chance—another of the significant happenings that we call accidents—led me toward her.

I had left the office at seven o'clock, and passed the early evening at the Grand Café, at first with some of the Bream Company's men, who were superintending the building of an ordnance depot, and later with Gilliam.

Second-Lieutenant Gilliam had been with the French at Verdun, and in his own Army was unlikely to be promoted because he was too big and stubborn to truckle successfully. Sober, he spoke in monosyllables, but if one could get three pints of Vouvray into him he might be induced to tell, in a low, unemotional voice, impressive from the lips of a man physically so large, a story of the French that was worth hearing. He had seen them go up to almost certain death through the visible wreckage of their own divisions, and his plain speech managed to convey the elusive idealism that is absent from the printed accumulations of horrors, and that the rhetoricians cannot even indicate with their verbal flagwaving. He could describe a straggling file of aviators joking each other on parade, so that one saw them not as

Ouida heroes or thugs or clowns, but as men who in their several fashions saw the Vision and answered to the Singing Word, without which life in a time of pressure becomes mere pulp.

I left him thinking silently of Douaumont, saluted the nodding pair of Chinese dolls in passing, and was on the sidewalk of the Rue Nationale.

It was eviction time for soldiers, and as I walked toward the bridge the cafés were yielding up their military clients, the M. P.'s were busy with challenges and threats, and from revolving knots of lingerers on the corners emanated the shrill notes of women, protesting or provocative.

The moon was full and shining, and the breath of spring was in the night air. Despite the war, despite the metallic vulgarity of the traffic that went on in the alternating strips of pale light and shadow of the sidewalks, humanity in Tours felt life's annual urge, and was about its vernal business. The exchange was not all brutal or mercenary; here and there were couples strolling naturally, in the vague way of lovers the world over, drifting homeward under a full white moon.

I walked as far as the centre of the bridge and stood looking down at the river, and back at the city's mass of buildings, and wondered, as one does in what seems a pause of life, at the changes of destiny. After many months of sickness and misfortune, I had come to France as a member of an army of young men—a very unimportant member, but still one who had a place.

A man virtually resurrected by his own stubborn vitality, having little influence to worry over and few obligations to regard, I was in a position singularly free. My routine business was to pay with daily labour for the opportunity to admire and to see; my passion, to pursue an ideal of beauty, of rhythm, which might be an illusion or a reality, but which would never, in either case, be robbed of its mystery. . . . I stood looking down at a river whose historic name sang to me, and was about to step back into a city where fantastic conditions existed. What would be the next shift?

Most of the groups along the Rue Nationale had been dispersed when I returned. The lights in the cafés were dimmed. From the side streets came laughter and the occasional slamming of a door. A group of civilians, among whom I thought I saw two of my companions of the early evening, was disappearing in the well-known direction of Le Singe Vert, where an all-night welcome was presided over by a cheerful old she-ruffian who had once occupied a similar position in Seattle. Beside a shop doorstep two Frenchmen, one of them not more than four feet tall, debated a crisis, chiefly with their fingers, while a third yawned audibly in their faces.

Farther down the street, in and around the puddle of pale yellow light still indicating feebly the entrance of the Alhambra, a small crowd was knotting.

As I skirted it, I recognized the babel of the usual mixed argument, carried on in slovenly French and English. Several French and American soldiers, all more or less drunk, had begun to quarrel, while the decrepit Jehu of a moth-eaten cab awaited the outcome like an aged bird of prey somnolent on a limb. Soon there would be a descent by M. P.'s, and, after the conventional amount of wrangling and perhaps a scratched face or two, the principals would be separated, the flower-women and street scum would sift away and quiet would reign.

I had passed the crowd when a woman screamed.

Glancing back I caught the gleam of a wide red hat and saw Emilienne between the weaving figures.

Following the scream the pitch of all the voices rose. As I pushed in without definite intention, a blow was struck, and in the resulting rush and whirl of bodies, Emilienne's was thrust against me. Holding her upright, I said almost automatically:

"Let me get you out of this."

Attention was centred for the mo-

ment on the brawlers, and before it could leave them I had pushed the girl into the waiting cab, galvanized the driver into action with a five-franc note and we were off over the cobbles.

While Emilienne, frightened and angered into volubility, rattled off the unimportant details of an international dispute between two males, neither of whom had a shadow of permission to claim her society, I was inclined to regret my unusual presence of mind. I had let myself in for cab fare, a long ride and an hour's loss of sleep for the sake of a woman in whom I was not interested. I do not know at what moment annoyance ceased and attraction began, or why. I suppose that my individuality was weakened by weariness, and a slight influence sufficed to turn it. I suppose, too, that the almost accidental flash of cleverness in an emergency, from one known to her rather favourably than otherwise, caught Emilienne at a psychological moment. And always, *C'est la guerre.*

When the cab stopped in a narrow street that I did not know, she said with her hand on mine:

"*Ici je suis chez moi.* I shall see you again soon?"

"*Et le major?*" I said. "Et Wr-robansong? There can be nothing between you and me if he is still your friend."

"That is finished," she said, smiling at me for the first time.

"And you are free?" I insisted.

She replied exactly as before; and the clasp of her fingers tightened over mine.

CHAPTER VII

Emilienne's two rooms were in the older section of the town near the river, in a house with walls like a castle's. They were damp, but almost painfully clean; she used to polish the hardwood floor herself, on her knees. She was as acquisitive of trifles as a nesting sparrow of straws, and many knick-knacks were in evidence; but there was not the collection of hideous moron-photographs—suggestive of figures from group pictures of early college crews at home—that are found in the apartments of the class by which many Americans judge French women.

Mimi—I called her that—was a girl of some instinctive refinement, due, perhaps, to a throwback. Her stalwart, stupid ancestry, I gathered from hints she dropped when she was not intentionally distorting the truth, had once been weakened by a cross of gentler blood. Of course she had not been recognized by De Trévières's relatives. Her income from him ceased at his death. Indeed, the boy had not much ready money, and she had received from him only one small remittance after he left Tours. She had been forced to sell very soon some of her more important belongings, including the expensive spaniels.

Between us a strange relationship, never really intimate, grew up. It was as though we leaned vainly toward each other across a barrier, which was invisible, intangible, vague, but of the existence of which we were always tacitly conscious, though we did not acknowledge nor did I then attempt to define it. As a rule we ignored the past. She asked me a few questions about myself, and the long and circumstantial stories that she told had to do with the gossip and petty incidents of the café life, in which she mingled without being really a part of it, and which had for her the fascination of a drug. Having once broken her silence, she was voluble, and often I heard her musical but rather monotonous voice, detailing the artificial sorrows of some music-hall tragedienne, run on until it melted into a drone like a dream-fugue.

Sometimes she was sphinx-like, drawing her wide brows together over the black coffee which she obtained only after a life-and-death struggle, so far as sounds were concerned, from the ancient quean who kept the lodging.

As she sat cross-legged, with her feet tucked under her, and the cup of steaming liquid held delicately between her hands, she called to thought a small

exotic sybil mute, looking out through slits with opaque eyes resembling porcelain, at something that only she could see. One day, she would let me go out without a word or look. The next, breaking her pose and leaping up as I was about to leave, she would twine her arms about me and in a flood of French beg me to stay lest some unnamed calamity befall. Looking back, I can now remember that more than once at such a time she spoke, strangely as I then thought, of her love for Raymond De Trévières.

From her I went toward my work through the narrow streets with blank gray or closely shuttered walls, which seemed always to be in a state of twilight, as though the old city were approaching or awaking from a night-session with its ghosts. The few people whom I saw, sluicing doorsteps or slinking from barred passageways, might have been figures from Tristan's time, and looked at me with as much suspicion as if I had been one of his hated myrmidons. Above me as I turned, loomed the medieval bulk of Charlemagne's Tower, and not until I emerged, after an especially long stretch between parallel blank walls, upon the Boulevard, fragrant under the double arches of Spring foliage, and crossing its generous width, approached the ex-garage, did I shake off the sense of a different life and time.

Usually I met Mimi in the middle of the evening at one of the cafés, and sat with her, or went to the Alhambra or the old Théâtre Français, where the inevitable revues were running. To escort a French girl of her class to a revue was not strictly according to caste principles, but despite praiseworthy efforts lines could not be closely drawn —except in the provost's rule-book— involving people of two nations constitutionally unable to understand each other's customs, and individually unwilling, in many instances, to try. . . . Personally I had a contempt, not especially creditable to my sense of fitness, for the hypocrisies. What could a convention of that kind matter (I thought) to me, a man without ties or a desire for them? I walked with Mimi where I chose.

One day Robinson, the fat Q. M. C. major, her former friend, spoke to me about her in the office, where I was always near the first window, as interpreter and head service clerk. He had been drinking, and was foolishly garrulous; but he would have been cautious enough not to open such a conversation with an equal in rank. He was learning to despise a man in my position—one who worked.

"I saw you in the Alhambra last night with Mimi," he opened cleverly.

"Yes?"

He wagged his heavy jowl.

"I wouldn't have so much to do with her if I was you."

Unreasoning rage, childish toward a man half drunk, but characteristic of the time and my condition, shook me.

"Are you giving me that advice as an officer?" I asked.

He did not follow my slant at all.

"In the first place it's bad form," he pronounced. "In the second, she's dangerous."

Then, evidently feeling that he could afford to supply the concrete example, he added confidentially:

"She's not quite right in the bean. She pulled a gun on herself one night."

"It's too damned bad she didn't pull it on you instead!" I exploded. "What stopped her, your thick head?"

His clouded eyes bulged when comprehension dawned, and the blood surged up into his face. I think he would have come through the window at me, but Orme, who was close by, had the common sense to push me away and lure him out of the building.

At his instigation, probably, I was taken in charge by M. P.'s a few nights later; he was the kind of man who would take revenge, sober, for an insult that he had provoked when he was drunk. I had hard work to convince a new desk-sergeant in the provost's office that my pass was good, and arrived at Mimi's late and somewhat shaken.

The idea that someone or something stood between us had been growing stronger, becoming a belief and taking definite form. Also, we had been bickering for several days, in the barbarous, nagging way of lovers whose affair has become tangled from trivial causes, with a deeper trouble beneath.

Superficially she was angry because, obtaining by rare luck a holiday of a few hours on Sunday, I had travelled to Luynes on the ridiculous little tram, with Orme and Val Chappell, Suzanne, Andrée and Suzanne's sister Marie, and picnicked in the grassy trench of the old empty moat, remaining until evening. In like manner I was annoyed because it seemed to me that lately I had been subsidized too freely on behalf of penniless French cousins, in Tours on permission from the front. I disliked unreasonably the unsmiling, weary boys, above whose sallow faces the black hair grew low in a peak. Their inscrutability weighed on my nerves. I could perhaps have played chess at that time with Fernand Loriot, but could not have endured with patience the gaze of his short-sighted, slightly dull brown eyes with their withdrawn expression. Mimi was sitting in the dark when I entered.

She did not speak until after I had found and lighted a candle, knocking from the table to the bare floor with a clatter, as I did so, some heavy metal object. The first glimpse that I had of her was the glint of her eyeballs, caught by a candle-beam.

Stooping nervously for the trench knife, a gift to her, that I had knocked from the table, I scolded her for the uncanny silence.

"I am tired to death," I said. "Your friend has just had me pinched."

"Which friend?" she asked, yawning intentionally.

"Wr-robansong, of course."

"But why 'of course'? I have many friends. You are jealous, *bébé*."

Exasperated, I spoke the thing that was in my mind.

"It is not of the living that I have cause to be jealous."

In every woman who is closely associated with a man there are at least two selves: the one her instinct teaches her to show to him, and the one she is. The two overlap and merge, and frequently she herself cannot tell to which one of them an act or emotion belongs. But soon or late in the relation there comes a time when, in a scene more stark than a dissection, a wind shakes the arras and from behind it steps a stranger without love or pity, voicing in words like blows her individual hatred of the dominant male, and the hatred of countless millions of the women of history before her.

The chaste woman, carrying the greater burden of vengeance, strikes hardest. At such a time, if the man be lame or crippled, she will inform him of the shame his condition has caused her. Every weakness of his that during the years he has attempted to conceal, she will drag forth, and in a cold, sacerdotal manner hang flayed upon a wall. For the good of his soul she will relieve herself by advising him of her essential indifference and utter superiority to him, and prove beyond a doubt that he is of the vulgar order.

Her passionate cousin of feebler intellect, ill-educated, and nearer to the madness which lurks around the corner for all minds, the more closely in proportion to their weakness, issues a shrapnel-spray of invective. Every deed of his that comes to mind is reached with fire, but especially the deeds performed generously and with clean intent. Each is misinterpreted deliberately, assaulted, tortured, and left mutilated on the field for dead. The trinket that he gave to her for love, she says he gave to hide his treacherous passion for another woman. He has conspired against her with his cronies, and means ultimately to thrust her into the gutter and desert her. Unreason stalks amid the carnage; any protest is effort wasted.

So would Emilienne have answered me in ordinary conditions, in a piping time of peace. But the time was extraordinary, and she was a witness and

victim of mocking calamity beyond the comprehension of stronger minds than hers. Instead of beginning with her scorn for me, she voiced in her ill-equipped and groping way the wail of women over the result of war, the female lament for the suffering and destitution caused by the absence, loss and crippling of their men. I learned that in reality she herself scarcely distinguished Americans from enemies. To her distorted personal vision, it seemed that all nations were intent upon pillage of the French. Why was the War started? What good purpose did it serve? It was a madness, in which only the French were sane.

Having established this basis, she turned on me, and blasted me from turret to foundation-stone. She spoke the indubitable truth: that De Trévières was a better man than I. She also said that he still came to her and was even then near by, between us. She had felt his presence many times, she said, and could not escape from it. It was not his fault or hers. He did not wish to trouble her, and of death and all that pertained to it—even of him—she was shudderingly afraid. But he belonged to her. Save for this universal madness, this criminal catastrophe caused by the great commercial influences and aimed against France, she would still be with him in the flesh, and both would be happy.

As she spoke she seemed to concentrate into something almost powerful, and instead of regarding her scientifically, as a vixen in explosion in a cage—as one comes to listen to those women—I felt for her a profound pity which overcame repulsion when at last she broke down genuinely but in due form, begged my forgiveness, and wept despairingly in my arms.

Actually to be wet with the tears of a woman who has just finished a tirade evokes a strange emotion. Striving earnestly to be sympathetic, one is nevertheless compelled to wonder how much of the distress is real, and how much histrionic.

Even when one is convinced, as I was in Mimi's case, of the genuineness of the sorrow, one cannot truly feel another's pain, unless one deceives one's self by indulgence in hysteria. Pity there may be and a degree of understanding, but separated by the mocking human limitation, the man and woman remain strangers at heart. The woman rests exhausted. In her weakness she becomes, with an irony of which she remains unconscious, a link between the watchful life on which she leans, and the world of visions and shadows in which the questioning spirit gropes, and through that world with the Unknown behind it, from which she comes. Through her body flows some strange current from the Source. The moments, charged with thoughts half-held, stream by. At last the mood fades. Moving cautiously a cramped shoulder, one looks down at the face of the mystery, now almost placid, and to the silence around propounds the general question.

CHAPTER VIII

It was impossible that with so wide a wedge in our curious relationship, Mimi and I should remain closely bound. I was placed in the position of rival to a dead man for whom, living, I had had only admiration and respect.

Omitting from consideration the ridiculous element of the matter, I could not endure the thought of jealousy on Mimi's account. Sex-jealousy had always seemed to me one of the meanest and most degrading of the passions—a resort that was in reality a trap for unhappy men and women so weak and stupid that they could think of no other path to take. One might be guilty of some sins and still preserve cleanliness, I thought, but jealousy indicated an essential taint. I had never been jealous concerning Mimi, though the Ordnance and Quartermaster officers made frequent tests of her constancy. In fact there had been no real cause; for with the instinct which we can trust only in the case of a woman with whom we are not deeply infatuated, I under-

stood that by preference she had been faithful to me.

I could give her money, but could no longer be her friend; and after a scene following a series, I was forced to tell her so. Our interviews had become a mere swinging from quarrel to reconciliation, almost as regular as the journeys of a pendulum, but unutterably wearying. Even pity yielded before the eternal tears and nagging, and at last I refused to talk with her.

Afterward I saw her in the cafés, preceded by the flower-woman, gravid with all the city's evil, who hovered around her public appearances like a pilot-bird. She had a new costume and a new red hat, even more flaring than the other; and in her neighbourhood posed sundry captains and lieutenants. In a manner meant to be disconcerting she rolled the glance of her violet-circled eyes across my insignificant figure in a corner, and bit the top of her fan coquettishly at the lieutenants. I would have done anything that I could to help her, but my emotions were rolled flat.

An order took me to Paris for a week while the Germans were reaching the city with shells from their long-range guns, tearing up a path of the Champs Elysées and knocking over a pedestrian or two according to the French accounts, and smashing the metropolis to ruins according to their own. We had aerial displays by courtesy of the Gothas almost nightly. But the strangest sights were the refugees, brought in like cattle from the districts about to be overrun by the Teutonic horde. Among them were many young girls, and aged creatures infinitely wrinkled, who had never been ten miles from their homes before, and to whom Paris was virtually as foreign as San Francisco. In their tragic faces no evidence of sentiment was legible, only stupid bewilderment. Their world had been blown to pieces as a bottle is smashed against a wall.

My return to Tours was within a fortnight of the marriage of Davis Powell and Mademoiselle B——; for so hardened had we become, by then, to the unnatural pace of events that we began to consider the coming generation as soon as the drive had been checked sufficiently to make it clear that in that month at least we should not be pushed into the Atlantic.

The marriage was the first international one of importance in that section. The bride's family had some social standing, and to observe the processes which accompanied the breaking of the ice was like attendance at a play. The first moves were tentative. Would the social structure totter if a barbarian were introduced? Apparently it would survive the desired strain.

The barbarian was presentable in his way, and a history might be invented for him; since his was a land of no social differences, his ancestry—which as a matter of fact was insignificant by American standards—was as distinguished as any. A postal inspector, he held also the rank of captain in the army. A captaincy in France carries some distinction; hence it was believed with rather touching faith that he was an officer of some importance. Mama progressed from a condition of horror at the choice between an American son-in-law and none, through resignation to a positive pluming of herself before the other mamas, over whom she discovered she had in reality scored a point.

She spoke no word of English, Mama, and was stone deaf besides. The prospective son-in-law had as much French as a mountaineer of his native Blue Ridge State. He was genuinely smitten with the girl, who was unusually tall for one of Latin extraction, almost beautiful, and faultlessly reared.

Knowing Powell as I did, and admiring him for many of his qualities, I could not help glancing ahead at the inevitable conflict between the gentle breeding, sweet disposition, and love of family of the girl and the cold-blooded selfishness of the ambitious husband. If adjustment between persons of the same nation were difficult, what would occur when, in addition to the usual troubles,

the bride clung to the customs of her own people, and her quaint English, so attractive in the early days, became an offence to ears accustomed to the idiom, after infatuation had worn off? . . . But she seemed attached to her tall alien, and to foresee difficulties in marriage is so easy as to be both trite and dangerous.

Having organized the purchase and made the presentation of the office gift —one of the two silver services to be found in the city—I was privileged and drawn to be a guest of note, on a steaming June day, and was given a holiday for the purpose.

First came the civil ceremony, very stately, at the Hôtel de Ville, with the wedding party passing up the marble stairway and into the execution hall between two lines of guests. Then the religious event, in the small Protestant church, packed almost to the choking-point.

The exercises were split into French and English. The American chaplain, understanding no French and having little adaptability, was ill at ease. The pastor, in his own pulpit, rose to the opportunity in his exhortation to the bride, delivering a beautiful and moving address. He spoke so vividly of the crippled and the heroic dead, by whose sacrifices the happiness of the couple then kneeling before him had been made possible, that even now, after the propaganda and the bursts of pathos and flapdoodle have sickened the mind of the very thought of oratory, I remember his effort as impressive.

Next we endured a reception in a stifling anteroom, and then adjourned for dejeuner, long drawn out, in the Hôtel du Grand Faisan. At the long table were young people only: comrades of the groom in uniform, and in light dresses the bride's schoolmates—delicate Simones and Celestes who reached out in odd awkward little ways toward possible emulation of their friend.

It was over at last, the party joined the elders in the reception rooms of the hotel, and Captain Betterton and I escaped across the street to the Grand Café for a few moments of refreshment and recuperation from our labours as interpreters. When we returned dancing was in progress—or rather an attempt at it; for the girls were but eighteen and nineteen years old, and there had been no dancing in France since 1914, four years before. Their quaint ignorance seemed a thing more significant of the length and severity of the War than many a history of hardships in the field.

At last the attempt at general dancing died away, and after a pause the bride stood up in her wedding-gown to dance a minuet with her brother. Perfectly and simply and gravely they danced it, the stately series of steps and poses that seems stilted to our negroid conception of what a dance should be. The guests sat silent or stood with folded arms, their faces reflecting something of the seriousness of the dancers. The young man, leading his sister for the last time as a maiden through the graceful measures, was about to yield her to an alien, while the body of the unknown lover who would have wedded her if peace had lasted was clay amid the desolation of some battlefield.

To the American she carried, not only her beauty, her innocence, and her strength, but her share of the tragedy of her country. Partly she would forget, but to forget wholly would be beyond her power. The slaughter of her countrymen was in the air she had breathed, their death was the very cause of her union with the foreigner. As the preacher had said, she must pray for their souls all her life. She was too keen, too finely tempered, not to remember. Through many generations her education had lasted. They who chanced to be her parents were obliged to give her to the stranger, but they could trust her. Though her husband took her across the ocean she would retain her character, and her children would inherit at least a little of the fineness that was hers, with the crude strength of their father.

CHAPTER IX

I LEFT in the early evening, with a rose from the bridal bouquet in my hand and in my heart the sentimental sadness which overcomes the homeless man at such a time, causing him irritably to doubt that he has read his own nature rightly, and to wonder if he is in reality so completely a wanderer as he has believed.

The dark street, into which a slow drizzle had commenced to fall, seemed not an avenue to adventure, but a dreary cul-de-sac, and the lights of the cafés, instead of beckoning, repelled. It was with an effort that I pushed away the dangerous mood, and entering the Café de la Ville, worked my way through its smóky murk among the soldiers and women. The scene of tawdry pandemonium, I thought, might counteract the day's experience, and restore me to a balance.

But the dull-witted alcoholic gaiety —the slopping of wine and lolling over shoulders blue with scented powder— only disgusted me, and I was about to make an exit when Mimi's flower-woman confronted me, thrusting into my face the sickeningly ingratiating smirk of the professional panderess. I gave her a franc and pushed by; but she caught my sleeve and urgently repeated in my ear that Mimi wished to see me.

"Say to her that I am sorry, but cannot come," I said.

She was insistent. Mimi was in the café, she said, and was in trouble. It would require but a few moments to talk with her. In fact the red hat of Emilienne became visible in the press only a few yards away, and I allowed myself to be led to a corner table, left free by the departure of a disagreeing couple. The flower-woman disappeared.

"I have already told you that it is useless for us to talk," I said to Mimi. "It is worse than useless now, in such a place. Why have you descended to this, to mix with common soldiers? Do you need money so badly?"

She said that she was in great need of money, that she had had nothing but bad luck since we separated; but when I asked her how much was necessary, she named a sum that surprised me.

"What do you need it for?" I asked her. "Do you think I am Rothschild?"

"All Americans are rich," she replied, with lowered eyelids. "I wish to go away."

"Where?"

"Anywhere. But afterwards to America."

A vision of Mimi in the United States assaulted me. It was what most of them desired—a visit to the land where the streets were paved with golden blocks, and diamonds were to be plucked from branches. But I had supposed her cured of credence in the fables.

"Why do you wish to go?" I asked, to draw her out.

She met my eyes squarely, with a haunted gaze.

"To America, Raymond may not follow me," she said.

So it was not covetousness, but the old belief. Without conviction I endeavoured to persuade her that it was a delusion; and as I argued, I was conscious of a growing and unreasonable irritation, the coldly brutal anger, almost feminine in quality, of a man who, knowing that he has finished with a woman beyond the possibility of renewal, wishes nothing from her except definitely to see her no more.

At last I said truthfully:

"To give you such a sum at once is impossible for me. I have nothing save my pay. I can give you a few hundred francs at a time, no more."

"You can borrow."

"I have no credit here; nor would you be allowed to go, if I had."

After wearying repetition she seemed to accept the situation. If I would see her home she would go quietly, she said. Praying for patience, and sorry for the cruelty of my coldness toward her, I agreed.

The drive was accomplished in a merciful silence. She seemed almost

unconscious of my presence beside her, and when, on arrival at her door, she asked me to come in for a moment, I thought it safer to comply than to risk changing her mood by a refusal.

Within, she left me with a word about the landlady.

The rooms were as I remembered them, clean and neat, like rooms roped off for exhibition. Whatever Mimi's deviations or descents, it was clear that she had retained one characteristic of her individuality. The neatness of her rooms was symbolic of a daily struggle, and my guess was that it was the fruit of her only victory.

There came to me the realization that her whole life was a struggle for which she was ill-equipped. At the best her decisions were little more than a casting of lots—she had no logic or ability to weigh. She could not hold to a definite conclusion, as women did in books. (Who could do that, indeed?) There was for her no one love transcending all; like the majority she was capable of a number, of almost equal strength. Had De Trévières lived she would have remained with him during the natural span of a sincere affair, but there were in France a hundred others who would have chimed with her as well, if chance had brought them forward. The War had come, disorganizing and changing, and by stark tragedy had destroyed a pleasant emotion, and substituted for it an obsession.

So thinking, I had stretched myself out to rest upon the bed, once the property of General Blanc—for as every New England inn was honoured by a visit of George Washington, so every French bed has supported at some period of its history the august person of a general. I was a victim of the nervous exhaustion which does not obtain its sleep normally, but either falls into unconsciousness so deep as to be almost a coma, or lapses with but a slight transition into a semi-waking doze.

Slipping into the latter condition, I seemed to pass again through the ceremonies of the day, with the difference that this time I found myself in the position of the bride's father: a situation which caused me acute embarrassment, since the rôle of parent to a marriageable child was one of those for which I had never prepared myself. From this nightmare I passed into conversation with Marshal Lannes, dying of the loss of both his legs, which were carried away by a cannon-ball on the field of Wagram; and he became, without shock or incongruity, young Raymond De Trévières, laughing as I had seen him fifty times in Tours. . . . A ghastly change came over the laughing face; it was no longer that of the living aviator, but of his corpse as it must have appeared after the disfigurement of a fall from the sky.

Writhing in my doze, I twisted away from the horror, and De Trévières became Mimi, telling me through my dream that all was at an end for her; that she could no longer endure the barren visits of her former lover, and must join him in his own world.

With the sub-conscious cunning of the dreamer I understood that I must not show surprise. I lifted myself from the dream into reality with no other physical motion than that of raising the eyelids, and saw the actual Mimi beside the bed, with the trench knife in her hand.

Even a man just roused from sleep could realize instantly that her eyes were those of a madwoman. With a single movement I was off the bed, and clutched her wrist as, screaming with surprised rage, she struck at me with the knife. Her screams were my salvation. Hoarse and insensate, they came from between her frothing lips like blasts from a horn, and in a few moments our struggles were broken in upon by denizens of the house, some of whom had sufficient presence of mind to help me to pin her down.

The screams continued after she was securely held, and in the intervals between them she clamoured, in the argot of the streets, which in her senses she never used, for my head on a charger, in effect. The police were heard at the door. A large Frenchman in a blue

apron made for my benefit a significant gesture toward a window, and I went over a two-foot width of stone sill and down to the pavement below with the speed of a fox over a hedge.

As I padded up the street the screeches followed me, and my eyes carried a cinema of the scene of devastation, with whirling bodies throwing by candlelight grotesque shadows amid the overturned furniture, and the congested face of the maniac, mouthing iniquity and inhuman, senseless sounds. I was myself seized by a mad impulse to shriek back in answer, between the high blank walls of the stone streets, like Montresor shrieking in answer to his maniac in the cavern of the tale of the Amontillado.

CHAPTER X

THUS passed Mimi. The next morning I could learn only that she had been removed and was being cared for officially. The French law presents to the foreigner an impervious front, concealing that which it prefers to conceal by one of two expedients: betraying nothing by saying a great deal very circumstantially, or telling a great deal by saying nothing. Ah, the blandness—and the insolence—of the French official! . . .

I used to think of her sometimes on the return voyage, when, during a lull in the continuous poker game, I went out on deck to watch the wind whipping spindrift from the tops of the waves. She was like the spindrift, as fleeting, as inconsequential. Or no; for how can we assume that anything is inconsequential? And as to significance: I think she had more than most. She was a haunting little figure in the enormous tapestry of the War, which included all weaves and colours, dull, gorgeous, and incongruous.

If I had made a second journey to France, I might have yielded inartistically to a passing temptation to learn her ultimate fate; but the Armistice caught me just as my orders were coming through, as it did many a better man, and in the circumstances I was thankful to obtain an early discharge, instead of being left ingloriously to the anti-climax of an indefinite detention as superintendent of the Colonel's beds of cannas in the camp known to the Army as the Quartermasters' Country Club.

MARRIAGE begins with friends throwing rice; it ends with lawyers throwing mud.

MEN achieve success by shouting down their competitors; women by whispering about them.

LIVE your life as though it were going to end before forty. It will.

FROM THE BOOK OF MIRACLE

By Leslie Nelson Jennings

IN a far country, beside a sea that is no longer known—a purple sea of wonderment and peril—there lived a youth named Glaukos. It was his wont to walk beside the sea and search for pebbles, for in those days Beauty was in simple things.

Now it came to pass that he found upon the sand a stone of strange loveliness, mysterious as the midnight, deep and secret as the sea.

"Behold!" said Glaukos, "I have found a thing unknown to me; it is beautiful; it must be that it has powers not of earth, for in it are the stars of the sky, and the moon thereof!"

So he took this stone to an Astrologer, who said to him:

"Glaukos, you have done wisely to bring this to me. It is a gift from the Gods, and you do not understand. Hearken!" said the old man. And he made the stone to speak to Glaukos with the music of a forgotten tongue. And the stone told him many things that only his heart could remember. It said:

"I am of the Gods, Glaukos. I will show you the home of the Gods; I will teach you their language, and you will be even as they. Use me, and I am yours."

And the Astrologer said:

"You have heard!"

So Glaukos took up his stone and departed. But the stone kept singing and would not be stilled. "Cast me into the sea!" it murmured. But the youth said: "Nay! You are mine to keep for ever." Then the stone commanded: "Leave me by the wayside!" To which Glaukos replied: "Nay! You are mine to keep for ever." Then the stone made answer: "It is written thus on the invisible tablets, where the Law is kept."

And Glaukos was seen no more in that country beside the purple sea, for he had returned to the people of his birth—to the Gods who were his kindred.

This was related to me by an Astrologer, who also said:

"The stone is not lost. It will be washed up beside another sea. Look well where the sand is restless and the surf is hungry for the earth. In these places are the gifts of the Gods."

THEATRE Orchestra: something that keeps time with the feet of the audience.

WHEN a man tires of women, it means that he has taken up with cuties.

THE TELEPHONE CALL

By Violet M. Lezard

SHE took up the receiver nervously, and a pulse in her throat told of her agitation and discomfort.

It is no easy matter for a woman to telephone the termination of a betrothal, and that is what Mildred intended to do.

For three years she had been the affianced wife of Laurence Johnstone, and for two years out of the three she had been sorry.

Johnstone was an ideal man, and in a sentimental moment—in an appropriate setting of "cold white moonlight"—she had softly answered "Yes" to his proposal.

And now she was sorry. Sorry for Johnstone, because he would be inconsolable at the loss of her. Sorry for herself, because his very goodness would have meant her security for life; and sorry for her people, who expected her to settle down and relieve them of all responsibilities as far as she was concerned.

But her sorrow, great as it was, did not outweigh the boredom of three years' attachment to a "good man."

God! How she longed for him to be mad and bad——

To catch her in an impassioned embrace and suggest wild, impossible things that she would indignantly refuse! But would she refuse?

Why should his "goodness" weary her so?—— Unless she were bad!

Then, so be it, she would call it the badness in her that revolted at the thought of an eternity with Johnstone as the figurehead of her life.

But what of him? Would he turn to drink as a consolation in his grief at the blow she was about to strike? Or would he, perhaps, do something more desperate? Her imagination took fright, and she visioned him with a revolver in his hand, a set, determined look about his mouth, and a pained expression in his "good" brown eyes.

Then the picture faded, and she thought of once, long ago, when she was quite a girl, and a man whom no stretch of imagination could call "good" charmed her days—and now, after all these years, he had come back.

Come back with the same laughing eyes of old to taunt her with the respectability of Johnstone, whom he laughingly called "the Bishop."

It was only three days since he had returned, and in those three days all the wild unconventionality of their past escapade surged within her, and she longed to be free.

"Hallo!" She was startled out of her reverie by the voice of the telephone operator, and gave the number she wanted huskily.

It was a long time before she heard any sound.

Then the faint moan of the stormy night trembled across the wire, and now and then the rumble of a tramcar was heard in the distance.

What had happened? Why did Johnstone not answer her call?

Hush! At last she heard his voice, low and distinct—the same "good" voice she had listened to for three years—the same—yet how different!

The low tones vibrated with passion and desire—and—oh, merciful Heavens!—not speaking to her!

She was an unconscious eavesdropper. He must have left the receiver unhooked.

"Darling," he was saying, "God alone knows how I adore you! Each day you become more adorable——" Here he had laughed exultantly. "And did you think I was going to give this

up—this—the delight of holding you in my arms and knowing that you are mine—mine——"

Then a woman's voice had answered, sad and piteously: "Oh, Laurence, what can we do? What of Mildred and your marriage?" Silence for a moment, then: "Well? What of her? She has never known all the past three years, why should she ever find out now? Marriage can make no difference to us. We are natural mates. Of course I must marry her—*noblesse oblige*—but afterwards——"

Mildred knew that the telephone stood on a small table near his bed.

Gently she put the receiver down. She had heard enough.

After the first surprise had worn off she reviewed the position. So this was the man whose goodness had bored her——

Well, so be it! Circumstances, as we all know, alter cases, and the circumstances now made a decided difference to Mildred.

She would marry Laurence Johnstone—*noblesse oblige*—but afterwards——? The laughing eyes of the man who had come back beckoned her soul——

Afterwards it would be so easy.

GHOSTS

By Harold Seton

TAKE maids of flesh and blood away:
'Tis ghosts alone that I adore!
The sirens of a former day
Attract and hold me more and more!

The Queen of Sheba I have sought,
And Cleopatra I have wooed,
To fair Du Barry paid my court,
Nell Gwynne admired in merry mood!

I've clasped Troy's Helen in my arms,
Found Phryne's kisses rich and rare,
La Pompadour's revealed her charms,
As also has La Vallière!

Take maids of flesh and blood away;
'Tis ghosts alone that I adore!
The sirens of a former day
Attract and hold me more and more!

ALL the great things of life are inspired by women. It is also women who keep men from accomplishing them.

WRINKLES are the places where the film has begun to wear out.

POISE

By Helen C. Roberts

I

IT vexed her a little when she returned to the house that afternoon to find Randall's ugly tawny overcoat flung across one of the chairs in her immaculate white entrance-hall. Randall was always dropping his personal property about—he was quite disgracefully careless and untidy.

She sighed impatiently as she took the hideous thing by the scruff of its neck. She had been spending a delightful hour with a famous, fastidious literary personage who had read her unpublished novel and had told her that it possessed qualities "unusual in the work of a woman."

She was still glowing with the sharp, triumphant joy of that hard won praise. She was beautiful, and young and rich (at least Randall was rich, which came to the same thing)—but she had only one passion. People have called it the creative impulse. It was the joy of digging into her own intelligence and of bringing out treasure.

As she gathered up the overcoat, a pink folded paper tumbled from one of its gaping pockets. There was no envelope enclosing this letter. It was highly characteristic of Randall, she noted, that there should be no envelope, that he should callously allow the thing to tumble—nude, pink, and shameless—on the floor where any servant in the house might lay greedy hands and eyes upon it. Only one-eighth of its whole surface was visible as it lay there, but the writing was so enormous that she could not avoid reading it from where she stood.

It was vile writing—absurdly vulgar and slipshod. Her marked gift for characterization permitted her to visualize the unknown writer of the highly-perfumed sheet with a lightning quickness and clearness. To the actual words—which chanced to be: "Sorry, dear, you have caught a nasty cold and won't be able to come round to-night"—she attached a slighter consideration.

She put out her dove-coloured slipper and touched the thing distastefully. Necessity, however, compelled her to pick it up, and on the reverse quarter there flashed at her this tender postscript:

"Dear old boy, I can't *bear* you to have that nasty cold!"

She crushed the missive hurriedly back into Randall's deepest pocket, buttoning the flap securely over it. She felt as if some ill-bred cur had sprung at her—leaving her, not frightened, but ruffled and sharply annoyed.

Having carried the coat into the hall and hung it on its proper hook, she went to her own room and dressed for dinner. There was no guest to-night, and she had been hoping for a quiet evening for herself and the creative impulse. However, Randall clearly wasn't going to that "little supper" he had mentioned yesterday. He had scratched the event in consequence of a cold in the head. That meant a tedious dinner for two. Nevertheless, she put on a bewitching frock. She could not avoid dressing charmingly—that, too, was temperamental.

II

RANDALL faced her at dinner with a red nose and a husky voice. Apart from his malady, which was unbecoming to him, he was not bad-looking. His cold made him sorry for himself, yet between

the courses he found time to ask her how she had spent the afternoon.

"Having tea with Robinson Dix," she replied.

"With that old stick!" There was a glint of sympathy even below his huskiness. "Still hammering away at that blessed novel? When is it coming out?"

"Next month."

"Rather a come-down, isn't it, old girl? You going in for novels, I mean, after poetry, and all that high-toned stuff?"

"No. The novel is a respectable art-form."

He blew his nose exhaustively. He was getting worse, and beginning to have trouble with his *m's*. "Well, I don't read 'em," he admitted, "so perhaps I'm not the best judge. But I bust say I'm not buch lookig forward to seeing by name attached to that sort of sentimental tosh, you know."

"*Your* name?" inquired his wife.

"By name, or your name—it's the same thig."

"Don't bother yourself, Randall," she said, rising, "You will never see your name advertised in connection with any sentimental tosh—that is, if you are careful to keep out of a breach of promise court—or any other. Your cold is making you fanciful!"

"I don't feel up to buch," he admitted. "Think I'll toast by the fire a bit—then turn in."

"I'm going to write in the study. But come to me in an hour's time. I have something important to say to you."

He agreed, but without paying any particular heed to her request. The dinner-table had been discreetly lit, but now she was under the full blaze of the electric light, and he was looking at the shimmering blue of her dress, which was more vivid in colour than those she usually wore.

"How ripping you look this evening, Di!" His voice became clearer with the force of some new feeling. "I wish we could go out somewhere to-night—if it wasn't for this beastly cold—"

"With, or without it, you had a previous engagement," she reminded him.

"And you wouldn't have come," he retorted. "You don't like the shows that I like— You'd rather—"

"Don't forget," she interrupted him in her cool, clear voice, "before you go to bed—I have something important to say to you."

III

She knew exactly how the interview would arrange itself.

First she would address Randall, not lengthily, but with point and severity. She would explain that, though she was not jealous or exacting, there were limits to her generosity. She would tell him that, in the present case, these limits had been exceeded—that the affair must be broken off at once, and permanently.

Then Randall would reply. He would bluster perhaps a little, devise excuses, probably sulk. But, at the same time, he would be ashamed of himself, troubled, and rather hurt; and, at the end of half an hour, he would apologize and do as she desired.

The ending was familiar for the reason that this was not precisely the first time that an interview of this sort had occurred. The whole process worried and disgusted her not a little. It jarred upon her by its vulgarity, and distracted her mind from its beautiful creative impulses. She knew that the victory wou'd remain with her. She had always been the victor. First, because she was the stronger of the two, and secondly because, in spite of his aberrations, Randall really admired her to a ridiculous degree.

He admired, in short, everything in her, with the exception of her genius, which he was unable to comprehend.

"Randall loves me," she once said disdainfully to Robinson Dix, "for everything in me that is purely second-rate!"

By that she meant her dancing, her singing, her taste in dress and furniture and jewellery, together with the whiteness of her skin, the golden glint of her hair, the beauty of her eyes and lips.

Strangely enough, it was for these inessentials that Randa'l loved her and would continue to love her!

IV

She noted now, with anger and surprise, that, though the clock had struck, Randall had made no appearance. She crossed the hall and opened the door of the dining-room.

He was asleep in the deep chair in front of the fire, with the gray Persian curled up snugly on his knees. He was breathing uneasily and there was a feverish glow on his cheek.

It was impossible that she should be sorry for him because he had a cold in the head! But for *this* cold in the head he would have been, at this moment, in another woman's house—in another woman's arms. No; the reason why she hesitated to wake him was a wiser one. Suffering as he was from a heavy cold, would he not be wakened now in too stupid a frame of mind to listen intelligently to her reproaches?

Having made her decision then to postpone these till the morrow, she stood a little longer on the rug, surveying him.

What a boyish face it was still, in repose, how round the cheeks, how ruffled the fair hair above the flushed forehead. It was not a lofty forehead like Robinson Dix's. Poor Randall could not understand her friendship with Robinson Dix: an intellectual affinity went beyond his consciousness. Robinson Dix was a genius—his critical judgments were flawless crystals. It was delicious to her to con the phrases in which he had praised her novel. "Unusual qualities in the work of a woman" . . . "Distinction"—"a sense of balance," "proportion," "poise."

"*Poise!*" Most of all she liked that delicately expressive word which, in its five letters, seemed truly to sum up her genius, her character, the fine flower of her whole personality.

Randall stirred in his sleep, without waking. The gray cat moved, too, on his knees, and he began, half-consciously, to stroke its velvety ears. He was absurdly fond of the creature—would play with it, talk to it. He would do just the same by any dog or kitten that came into the house. Children, too, adored him.

Well, of course she had always known that Randall would make an excellent parent. However, nobody could reasonably expect that a woman should be, in more than one sense, creative. On that point, it was necessary to exercise a sense of proportion—poise.

"Poise." She had it! Robinson Dix had told her that she possessed it in a high degree. Or might he perhaps consider that, on this particular occasion, she was holding the balance, just a shade unevenly?

It was true that she owed something—(a good deal?)—to Randall. She had been one of six penniless sisters. She had had nothing, not even birth, only brains and beauty. Randall had given her wealth, position, the ease to fulfil herself, the means, even, to introduce herself into the world of Robinson Dix. Otherwise, her delicate literary gift might have been trampled upon, killed. And she had married him deliberately, and with her eyes open.

Say that possibly the balance *was* a shade uneven? It would be a simple matter to right it. Randall must get his scolding to-morrow, because he deserved it. But, after it, she might possibly be a little kinder. She had always meant, for instance, to suggest that he should leave town for a month or two; this being the only certain way of breaking through a discreditable entanglement. But suppose now she were to propose something in the nature of a genuine holiday ramble? Randall was mad on fishing and hunting. He was always talking about the Maine Woods. That place might be devoid of intellectual society. But she had finished her novel. And even there one might find (she despised the word "copy"), say, inspiration, fresh material for the creative impulse.

So she made her sacrifice. And made it willingly, for the sake of Robinson Dix whose judgments must not be falsified.

"Poise." Yes, she had it in a supreme degree! And it would be *so* easy

to be a little kinder to Randall. Other people found it easy to be kind to him. For the first time that evening she thought again of the nameless author of that rose-coloured letter. Rather a fat young woman, kindly and careless, abominably dressed? But certainly *kind*. There was a sort of middle-class, motherly sympathy in that scribbled postscript. "Dear old boy, I can't *bear* you to have that nasty cold!" For herself, she had not been greatly troubled by Randall's colds. Of course, if they had disturbed her thoughts or wakened her at night—? But, fortunately, as her bedroom was on a different floor, there had been no fear of that.

But what would that pink woman do now, she asked herself, in the presence of Randall and his cold? Well, of course "she would make a fuss of him." Suggest mustard plasters for his chest—or was it his feet? No, plunge his feet into boiling mustard—comfort his throat with jujubes, his nose with vaseline. Administer syrups—hot drinks?

She half smiled, remembering the famous recipe of an elderly aunt who had ministered to her in her own childhood. A famous Cold Cure made of milk, lemons, treacle, "laced" with something more potent. Should she order such a brew to be compounded for Randall? Or, why not compound it herself?

She went into the hall, rang the bell, and directed a surprised servant to bring her the ingredients on a tray. She returned to the dining-room, softly poured water into a copper kettle, softly struck a match to light the spirit lamp.

Yet the slight noise wakened Randall at last. He looked at her with dazzled eyes, gasped, and struggled to his feet.

"I say, Di, I'm frightfully sorry! I was sitting here, nursing Toodles, and never noticed how the time went!"

"All right."

"But—there was something important you wanted to say?"

"It will keep for a bit."

He was looking curiously at her as she stood at the table, holding a lemon in one white hand, a knife in the other.

"I say, Di, what the deuce are you up to?"

"Making you a cold cure. You must drink it boiling hot just before you go upstairs. Or, if you'd rather, I'll bring it up to you after you are in bed?"

Randall gaped as if the world had come to an end.

"You darling!" he cried hoarsely. "You precious darling!"

A BEGGAR

By Charles Divine

I WALK the winding, open road.
I beg as I go along
Of the sun for its gold, and at night a star
To listen to my song.

I ask for alms of the highway wind,
For its kiss perfumed of the sod,
And beauty in bending trees by the road
Acknowledging their God.

"DARLING"

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

I

"AND I came here because I wanted peace!" Muriel Shipman reflected with annoyance. She had planned on a delightful evening of reading in her pretty sitting-room; and here she was, at the end of half an hour, letting her attention stray from the page before her and striving involuntarily to pick out words, phrases, imprecations from the confused uproar that reigned in the adjoining suite. Angry though she was at this invasion of roistering sound upon her solitude, she yet couldn't help admitting that the unspeakable sports behind the thin partition interested her more than the polite essay propped up on her knee.

"Ah, this will *never* do!" she exclaimed half aloud.

She had just surprised herself in the act of wondering whether the portly apoplectic chap with spindle-legs or his slender but equally florid host had been the author of the ironic remark, "You damned, good-for-nothing ass!"

She got up in haste from her chair and proceeded to shut the windows of her sitting-room with smart clicks. Probably the fragmentary sounds had floated in to her through the open casements.

She was soon undeceived on that score. The flimsy partitions were wholly to blame for the uncomfortable situation. Well—since she couldn't escape, since all her efforts to preserve the dreadful creatures' secrets for them had proved unavailing, she must needs consent to be a recipient of their alcoholic babble. She sat down again with a sigh of impatience—and straightway was listening with intensity.

They were playing poker and drinking—the four of them.

Muriel had a distinct picture of the convivial group. She had spent a few moments on her balcony after dinner and had watched the noisy quartet sauntering over the lawn from the restaurant. True sons of Belial they were, wandering forth flown with insolence and wine.

Even the casual glimpse of them in their desultory, vaguely rolling stroll had caused Muriel a frightened gasp. Somehow, they brought to mind at once visions of barbaric violence and outrage. Like a band of ancient mercenaries, they exhibited themselves shamelessly for what they were. In that at least they were admirable — plunderers, freebooters, swashbucklers perhaps, but transparently honest with each other and the whole world besides.

Muriel had had no difficulty in recognizing the host of the occasion. Just before the group had reached the apartment next to hers—the suites at the Inn were really a series of two-story cottages joined together—one of the men had stepped forward and thrown open the entrance-door; then, standing aside, he had waved his fellow-spirits in with a running fire of affable remarks and, by way of accompaniment, with a delightfully fraternal poke at the ribs of one guest and a resounding clap on the back of another. There was nothing cheap or jaunty about this exhibition; it was merely an act of gracious hospitality.

Muriel had been careful to make her

scrutiny markedly cursory; she had got but a fleeting, impressionistic view of her neighbour's three guests. They were all fat and beautifully preserved; their inflated cheeks shone glossily under the electric lantern. They were round and polished and, despite their obvious grossness, buoyant as so many toy-balloons.

Muriel was unable to distinguish any salient differences between two of them; the third, however, carried his swaying corpulence on a pair of spindle-legs and thus became stamped in her mind. Having ushered his rubicund brethren into the entrance-hall, the host paused for a moment on the threshold for a last puff at his cigar. As he then tossed it away with a vigorous sweep of the arm, he all at once—without the slightest warning—exploded silently into an immense grin and slapped his thigh in an obvious accession of sheer glee.

At that moment, his eyes met Muriel's. His broad smile did not vanish, did not even diminish a hair's-breadth; it simply remained on his face and enveloped the girl. So benign, so ridiculously happy did the man appear that Muriel was powerless to keep a tiny, answering ripple of sympathy from coursing over her lips. Whereupon her neighbour, as if in gratitude, touched his hat in all deferential civility and turned to follow his guests.

Muriel had been struck, during the brief interchange, by the mingling of youngster and bounder in the man's expression.

The face had a squarish ruggedness, with the features strikingly clean-cut. His smile had ploughed a succession of deep lines all over his countenance; at its height it had distorted his face as for an imminent sneeze. His silent mirth was evidently no slight thing—it rather screwed up his features, convulsed them like a paroxysm, before it loosened its hold.

Certainly, Muriel mused, she'd never witnessed a more deliciously boyish grin—the sort that's squeezed out to the last drop. The man's eyes, as they had looked into hers, had appeared keenly blue, frostly bright and sparkling. The crow's-feet raying out at the corners but added to the charm; they were by no means a sign of age, only a proof that the grins furrowing up the chap's face were of extremely frequent occurrence.

Despite these delightful assets, however, the air of the bounder was about the man. The particular quizzical cock of his head—as of a bird on the alert for worms—stamped him the sport. His hat, though worn quite straight, seemed raked a bit audaciously to one side, owing to his habitual attitude of keeping an ear perked. As to his complexion—that added the final touch! Above his white collar, the hue of his face showed startlingly sanguine, almost of a purple cast, with here and there patches of black where the blood seemed coagulated. He was obviously hearty, healthy, reckless—and apoplectic. Muriel, as she examined him, had gruesomely decided that his end, when it came, would be a simple sledge-hammer blow.

Eavesdropping in her sitting-room, Muriel had soon become so much engrossed in the poker game that she had no idea of the passage of time. She knew now the guttural, rasping tones of the host—the voice of a drinker, without a doubt, but of an amusing and intelligent one; more than once she became aware that she had silently joined in the merriment of his guests. The high, almost treble, absurdly supercilious utterance of Beale, the spindle-legged fellow, had early grown familiar to her also. Her friend's comments—she called the host "her friend" at present—at the expense of Beale were deliciously ironic.

The general tone of the conversation amazed the girl; she had expected volley upon volley of unspeakably shocking language. Instead, she had found the quartet of a high cleverness, of an authentically satiric trend. Some of the oaths had more than a dash of spice, to be sure; but the perfect spontaneity of them was sufficient to excuse them. Occasionally, Muriel heard whispers of

a harsh, explosive sort, followed by shouts of glee; at such times, she was unfeignedly glad that the partitions were strong enough to prevent the seeping through of the words composing the sibilant murmurs.

"But they *are* rather a jolly sort," she at last decided. "They've helped me through a long evening. They're sports, plainly enough—but gentlemen at the same time."

Then, all at once the crash came.

A long-drawn, rumbling growl from the host suddenly filled Muriel's ears; it was a terrifying sound, beginning on a deep booming note and rising quickly to a thunderous explosion, inarticulate but full of import. There came a moment of tense stillness after the ominous outburst had died away.

Muriel was already on her feet in an agony of suspense. She heard the scrape of a chair; breaking in on the silence as it did, it caused her heart to quake. A scared, scuttling patter of feet—like the panicky flight of a rabbit—followed; obviously, Spindle-legs had got up and was making timorously for the door.

The next instant, his irate host must have flung himself forward in total disregard of the furniture in the room. With one short oath he was on his quarry. A table crashed over, then a chair. To the tinkling accompaniment of smashing glasses, not to mention the thumps of overturned furniture, the battle went on. The two guests whom Muriel had failed to differentiate from each other seemed to be doing their best to restore order. To no avail, however! The tussling pair still rolled, still grovelled and scuffled.

Soft, muffled thuds reached Muriel's ears with an appalling frequency—blows dealt cruelly all over the weaker sport's carcass, she was sure. She could hear the antagonists' panting; strangled coughs, a loose rattling of breath almost like a cat's purr, then the hollow crack of a skull against the partition!—

That seemed to bring the conflict to a close. The next thing that struck in on the girl's consciousness was a tremendous bumping on the staircase. One pig-like squeak arose from the entrance-hall; Muriel got a bit of satisfaction from the thought that the victim couldn't be dead at any rate.

She rushed blindly for a window that commanded the entrance-porch of the other apartment.

As she peered out, the front-door was swung open. She saw the purple and dishevelled host lurch out, a lumpish burden in his arms. Under the lantern, she caught a glimpse of a swollen, gory, and apparently mashed countenance resting against her "friend's" shoulder, and of two thin and idly dangling legs. The shapeless mass was in a jiffy deposited with a thump on the floor; the next instant, it had rolled lumberingly down the two steps of the porch into the outer darkness.

The man at the door stood motionless, except for the heavy labouring of his chest.

At length, he emitted a guttural query:

"Can you get to a taxi all right?—or shall I give you a hand?"

"No—all right—quite, thanks!" half squealed and half blubbered the other.

Muriel, her eyes accustomed to the darkness now, could see the ponderous, Falstaffian figure scurrying away like mad over the lawn. A deep disgust had overwhelmed her when she turned back into the room.

II

MURIEL was punctilious in her schedule for the day; at nine o'clock sharp the next morning, she had her breakfast-tray brought up to the balcony outside her bedroom.

With difficulty she suppressed an exclamation of amazement at the sight of her brutal neighbour sauntering up and down the gravel patch before his front-door. His hands were clasped behind his back; in the morning light, as he paced there with an easy athletic stride, he looked surprisingly fit and devil-may-care. The night's orgy of alcohol and pugilistic feats had given his face a more sluggish purple tint than ever;

even so, he appeared full of healthy vigour and joyful insouciance. Moreover—incredible to relate!—his boyish grin had screwed up his countenance to a positive tension of glee.

Catching sight of Muriel he again included her in his silent grimace—did it companionably, politely. This time, however, he got no slightest response. His blue eyes widened at the rebuff; he seemed quite at a loss, unable to grasp the reason for her unkindness.

Evidently it had been his idea to communicate to her some slight measure of his own excessive well-being; since he was so damnably happy, wouldn't his smile radiate warmth and joy as effectually as the sun itself? So, as Muriel's glance, lighting on him without recognition, veered and focussed itself on a bush near by, his grin wavered from its fixed seat and an expression of actual sheepish embarrassment got mixed up with it.

He stopped short in his tracks, then swung round and recommenced his stroll, with his back to her. He was neither rude nor defiant—just decidedly perplexed.

He had taken but a few steps when a small furry object, shied out of an upstairs window of his apartment, caught him a muffled blow on the cheek. With a rumbling chuckle, he proceeded, by a sly motion of the arm, visible only to Muriel, to flick off his straw hat and send it spinning along the ground at his feet.

An excited, lisping whisper floated through the window from which the missile had been hurled; a sound of skipping and scampering down the staircase followed. Then the front-door burst open and two children raced out with peals of merriment. The tinier one, forgetting all about the porch-steps, darted forward into space, lost her balance and fetched up in the gravel with a wheeze of forcibly expelled breath. With her wind, her glee expired. She sent up an anguished shriek and had already burst into stormy sobs when the man took her up in his arms. At once, all was sunshine again!

They sat down—the three of them—on the steps; the man, in the middle, nursed on one knee the battered stuffed animal that had been used as a projectile. On either side of him wriggled a bossy and angelically blonde little girl. Extravagant terms of endearment filled the air; they fluttered about the choleric sport like butterflies around a poppy.

"Oh, *darling*, Kitty said—"

"No, no, let *me* tell it, Mad. I—I—*I* said that—that—"

"Oh, you're *too* slow, Kitty. I can tell him much better—You see, sweetheart—"

So it went. The man hadn't the opportunity to voice more than a growl of amusement now and again.

The vivacity of the children had soon reached the point of hysteria. The prosaic sitting-posture had early failed to satisfy them in their ebullience. They had therefore got up on their knees and, by a natural sequence, wreathing their arms around the man's neck, they had jigged and hoisted themselves into his lap. Still they refused to remain quiet; they twisted and bounced about and dug their elbows into him till he was forced to plead for a cessation of amorous hostilities.

To Muriel, munching toast and watching the scene out of the corner of her eye, the resemblance of the present picture to the old-fashioned steel engravings of "The Children's Hour" was ludicrously apparent. For the snugly venerable Longfellow, this purplish tippler had been substituted—that was all.

"And I really think I *prefer* it this way," the girl reflected.

The man at last managed to get to his feet—gingerly, so as not to crunch any pink fingers under his heel. The little girls scrambled up, too, tossing their curls and quivering all over from sheer seething excess of glee. The restless, fitful gaiety of the mites seemed to set them apart from the human species; they appeared much more closely allied, in their daring movements, to some fevered feathery tribe. It's no wonder that we vizualize sprites and

fairies as golden-pated children with wings.

They piped down clamorously the man's tentative proposal of breakfast. "But, *darling*, we want to play a game first!" It was indeed the children's hour—with a vengeance.

The two elfin things were at the helm and the man was powerless to budge them a single inch. They put their dancing curls together for a hurried consultation; obviously they had determined that to-day's game should be of a delicious, unique variety. It proved to be all the most sated youngster could have desired.

After many false starts—cut short by a "No, Kitty, *this* would be better," or a "Wait, Mad, I know a nicer way," with more intense, whispered parley—the scheme was perfected. "Darling" was to sit on the porch-steps with his hat on; the girls were to take turns hurling their decrepit stuffed animal at this improvised target. The sport started off in brilliant fashion; it was an indisputable success from the very beginning.

With all the infernal love of repeating a good thing eternally that characterizes children and makes them such a plague to the nerves, the infantile contestants kept up the game. To Muriel, it seemed as if the frolic went on for hours. In the end, she was forced to rush into the house; had she witnessed one more toss of the stuffed pet she would have screamed aloud with vexation.

At the French window leading into her bedroom, she paused and fixed a long and steady glance of appraisal on the children's belaboured victim. The grin on his face had deepened and deepened throughout the entertainment; it had lost now something of its first explosive aspect, had acquired a mellower serenity. It had become at present the smile of a man inconceivably, ineffably weary but at the same time happy even to silliness. It was quite probable that no debauch he'd ever been through had reduced him to such a state of utter fatigue.

III

Muriel was by no means surprised when, a week later, the newspapers announced that Mr. Beale Hanley had brought suit against Hugh Talbot "for malicious and totally unprovoked assault and battery." The innocent victim's left eye had been dealt with in so brutal a manner that the sight would be permanently affected; the big sum demanded on that score would not be judged exorbitant by any righteous jury. The injury to the feelings of the drubbed gentleman accounted for the rest of the staggering amount named.

By this time, Muriel felt herself quite one of the Talbot family, though she hadn't spoken a word to any of them.

For one thing, she knew their history thoroughly—Hugh's divorce and subsequent scrapes had made him a picturesque character, to say the least. And Muriel's chambermaid had contributed more than her share of anecdotes—how Mr. Talbot had a special grin that meant he was thinking of his two little daughters, how the Inn servants had hustled, under the master's supervision, to eliminate all signs of "that fearful fight" on the morning when the girls arrived from school, etc., etc.

Besides, Muriel had added a great deal to her previous knowledge of Talbot by watching curiously his dealings with his daughters. Whatever else he might be, there could be no doubt of his patient adoration for the mites under his charge.

On the evening before the journals headlined Mr. Hanley's complaint, there had been a stormy session directly under Muriel's windows. Evidently Talbot had expected a row, and, wishing to protect the exhausted slumbers of his offspring, had led the way to the porch-steps of Muriel's apartment. Perhaps he realized that she'd already heard so much it wouldn't matter how much more reached her ears.

At any rate, Hanley, his legal adviser, Talbot and a fourth man—one of the two unidentified guests of the night of combat—lounged there beneath her,

smoked big cigars and loaded one another with muttered opprobrium. In this one respect at least they had respected her sensibilities: they were scrupulously careful not to raise their voices. Naturally Muriel herself had no qualms of conscience, so far as straining her ears to a tense alertness went. She had a perfect right to make herself acquainted with every single word of the raucous colloquy.

She hadn't succeeded in making out much of the discourse. A great deal that was essential to her complete understanding of the case vanished into the night; only the profanity and the lush epithets of abuse seemed to possess effective carrying-power. The correct distribution of these ornaments and grace-notes of the conversation among the four men had been for Muriel an interesting and illuminating study. Talbot's invectives had been by far the most numerous; his "second" in the verbal duel had followed closely at his heels.

Beale Hanley and his solicitor, on the other hand, had exercised a signal discretion. With decided shrewdness, Muriel had soon reflected that Talbot must be aware his case was wabbly. He'd resolved to fight with all the grim force there was in him; he had his back squarely to the wall and, in his swaggering defiance, in his knowledge that the odds were overwhelmingly against him, he was crying down his treacherous fears. He would give no quarter—that was manifest.

Muriel had caught more than once the suave voice of the lawyer suggesting "a gentlemanly settlement out of the courts"; a furious growl from Talbot had greeted the proposal every time: "Take it to court, G—d d—n you; I'm—" and the rest would be lost. Yes, there could be but one explanation of the business: the spindle-legged one was wonderfully sure of his ground and Talbot was quite conscious that his was a hopeless cause.

Left alone at last with his second, Talbot had for a time mouthed desultory imprecations at the retreating backs of his enemies. Then he had lapsed into silence. Muriel could hear the crunch of the gravel under his feet as he paced up and down; at regular intervals, a shower of pebbles would patter smartly against her porch—evidently, under the stress of his emotion, the poor fellow would stop in his tracks and impotently kick the small stones of the driveway in every direction.

His companion broke the racking pause at length.

"I say, Hugh, why not settle the dirty business out of court? Wouldn't that be the pat solution?"

Talbot's reply was so distinct that every word of it reached Muriel.

"Oh, I don't care a *damn* about Beale and his suit. Let him haul it into the blooming limelight if he likes. It's already got into some of the newspapers. That'll be enough for my wife; choking the thing off now won't do any good. She's been waiting for the right moment; she'll pounce—see if she doesn't—"

Talbot's surmise had been correct; two days after Hanley's official threat of a suit had found its way into print, Mrs. Mary Scott Talbot's lawyers published a statement to the effect that their client was planning an immediate action against her former husband. The nature of the charge would be that by his actions Hugh Talbot had proved himself an unfit person to be intrusted with the upbringing of his young daughters. Certainly the afflicted Mary had picked for her attack the vulnerable spot in the armour of her erstwhile mate.

Mrs. Mary Scott Talbot's troubles were matters of common knowledge.

Muriel had never met the woman but for years had been listening to accounts of her misfortunes. She was the sort that everybody pitied and yet somehow disliked. Conservative, outlandishly virtuous, for ever ailing in body or mind or spirit, the unfortunate creature had always loathed publicity. The strange thing about her had been that her unswerving hatred of her husband had driven her into glaring notoriety again and again. The insane determina-

tion to wound him and spatter him with mud had brought her out of her cloistral retirement with the greatest regularity. Sometimes, when her strength was at a low ebb, she would simply make, as her comment on his latest scrape, a tremendous gift to some Orphan Asylum or Maternity Hospital; at other times, conquering her timidity, she would creep out into the world to do battle with him in the courts on some absurd pretext.

Whether she won or lost, the effort would result in a nervous breakdown. That she merited pity nobody could deny. She was more than half-crazed, of course; moreover, her married life had been a crushing disaster. How far her dreadful disposition had been responsible for Hugh's celebrated acts of unfaithfulness will for ever remain an unsolved problem. At any rate, the husband *had* deceived her; that in itself —whatever the extenuating circumstances—had been a blow of the utmost cruelty to the madly pious, incredibly upright Mary.

She was a zealot—that was what it came down to every time. Hers was the martyr's crown and equally hers were the fanatic's wolfish fangs. So it was that genuine sympathy and revulsion mingled in people's attitude towards the woman; in comparison, Hugh's brawls and rows and drunken excesses appeared like inoffensive foibles. One disapproved of Hugh and was fond of him; one realized Mary's saintly qualities and detested her. At least, that was the way Muriel felt; and everyone she had ever talked with on the subject had agreed with her.

Naturally, no one had hoped to fathom Mary's motives at the time of her divorce; it was simply beyond comprehension—her refusal to take the children. There had been tentative conjectures: perhaps she'd suspected that infants begotten by Hugh were damned forthwith, and she might as well wash her hands of them with all speed; perhaps, in her strange mystical way, she thought of maternity as a taint and of the tangible proofs of it as so many thorns in her already over-lacerated flesh.

Then again, fiend that she was in whatever concerned Hugh, she might simply have reserved the children as a trump-card up her sleeve, letting him have all the joy of possession until the supreme moment for his discomfiture should arise. Then it would be Mary's part to shake out her ace on the table.

Well—there could be no doubt at present. Mary's winning card lay face-up for all the world to see.

IV

If the younger child hadn't suddenly given the first croupy warnings of imminent whooping-cough, Muriel would in all probability never have interfered. It was her last day at the Inn.

Being by nature averse to the confused tumult of packing, she had left everything to her maid and taken refuge on her balcony. Thus, during all the hours of daylight she was a silent witness of Hugh Talbot's paternal solicitude. Kitty was feverish and fretful. Of course, the possession of a cough big enough and hoarse enough to penetrate hundreds of feet gave the child immense satisfaction; her every gesture warned the onlooker that she was by way of becoming a terrific, rip-roaring invalid.

Still, for all her pride, the little thing *was* miserably ill. She was cross as the devil, too. With her father and sister and nurse at her elbow, she lorded it over the Talbot balcony. They played hundreds of games; each new attempt at diversion would soon bore the child and she'd burst into petulant tears. "Darling's" antics seemed stale and unprofitable. Only in elaborate tea-parties did Kitty take any true delight.

Muriel had soon lost count of the number of times the table was set for festivities. The day must have been a fiendish ordeal for the indulgent father. Since Madeleine had no symptoms of disease, she chafed at these sick-room

tactics. Before long, every time Kitty saw fit to weep, Madeleine joined her. The nurse, too, turned ugly and could be heard muttering darkly about the efficacy of "a good spanking" in cases of temper.

Hugh ignored her as long as he could, then dismissed her in all gentleness. For the remainder of the day, he stuck it out unaided. His guttural rumblings never once took on an acrid quality; his adoring grin never once flickered to its extinction.

"Upon my word, the man's an *angel*," Muriel commented repeatedly.

She was to leave at nine in the evening. She dined early and eight o'clock found her ready for departure. The last hour threatened to drag to an interminable length. It was the very moment for mischievous thoughts to come tumbling into one's head.

All at once, Muriel surprised herself in the act of visualizing Kitty's return to her mother. The vision evoked was a dreary one.

If the child had been hale and hearty, it wouldn't have been so bad; children are unscrupulous, fickle little things. But the picture of Kitty's attempts to adapt herself in the midst of her whooping-paroxysms was downright intolerable. Mary would have no patience; her treatment would be a sickening mixture of syrupy medicines and lectures on Christian endurance!

Inspiration came in a blinding flash. Before she was fully aware of what she was doing, Muriel had drawn off her gloves.

The next moment, she was sitting at the writing-desk.

The letter that she wrote to Mrs. Talbot, in care of her lawyers, was dashed off at white heat:

"*My dear Mrs. Talbot*," it ran, "*I come before you with sterling credentials, as it were. My aunt, Miss Mathers, serves with you on the Executive Committee of St. Margaret's Maternity Hospital. My uncle, Townsend Shipman, is President of the Board of Trustees of the St. Francis Free Milk Fund. So you see, I hope, that my interest is genuine and unprejudiced. For the past few weeks I have occupied the apartment next to Mr. Hugh Talbot's at this Inn. Needless to say, I am not acquainted with him. It was my misfortune, however, on the night he attacked Mr. Hanley, to be an involuntary sharer in all that passed. The partitions are so thin that every word reached me. As I think the matter over now, I realize that my situation, during the quarrel, was such as to make me, strangely enough, a help to you. The statement on Mr. Hanley's part that provoked the attack was a direct insult to* you, *Mrs. Talbot. I shall not repeat it here. Mr. Talbot resented the words and became swayed by his anger. I heard enough, on that night, to convince me that in the end these two men will settle their difference out of court. Should you press your justifiable suit, however, I am afraid the truth would come out* in full. *That could only be a torture to you. Moreover, bringing to light as it would the sole occasion when Mr. Talbot acted from charitable motives, it would present him to the public in a rôle that is not* rightfully *his. Forgive me, Mrs. Talbot, for taking this perhaps unwarranted liberty. My sense of fitness and decency would not permit me to remain silent.*

"*Yours sincerely,*
"MURIEL SHIPMAN."

With feverish haste, Muriel copied this missive. At the top, she scrawled:

"*Duplicate of letter sent to Mrs. Talbot. I have watched you and the children; you are too charming a trio to be torn apart. Do settle with Hanley privately. It's the sensible course, I think.*"

Fifteen minutes later, on her way to the motor, Muriel dropped two envelopes into the post-box at the door. One was addressed to Mrs. Mary Scott Talbot, the other to Hugh Talbot, Esq.

V

For two months Muriel scanned the papers nervously and found nothing even remotely connected with the affairs of Hugh Talbot. So her disgraceful scheme had worked!

In New York during the autumn, her motor was caught one day in a traffic-jam.

Muriel, idly surveying the people trapped with her for the moment, at length realized that a man in a nearby automobile had swept off his hat and was focussing on her an immense grin. This time she returned his salute with frank good-fellowship. The two little girls beside him, each clinging to an arm, waved their free hands prettily in Muriel's direction; it was obvious that anyone whom "Darling" saw fit to greet merited an enthusiastic welcome from "Darling's" daughters. Just as Muriel was glancing away, she noted with a start of anxiety that Hugh's cheeks had begun to puff out and to change in hue from purple to black.

Her eyes widened with terror as, gasping and choking he lurched forward in his seat. Kitty and Mad, however, were by no means alarmed; they proceeded to pat the back of their convulsed parent politely but without great conviction.

Then Muriel understood; "Darling" was a victim of whooping-cough. The children were gentle and sympathetic; but the ailment was so old a story that they really couldn't act as if they thought it impressive.

Fortified by this glimpse, Muriel could reflect with satisfaction on her swift plunge into other people's affairs.

"But the perversity of it," she yet mused with an ironic smile. "He's a rake and a roué and a rounder; and Mary's a paragon of the sterner virtues!"

Well—that was beside the point. Hugh was a gem of paternity and that alone mattered.

I WILL GO BACK

By Clinton Scollard

I WILL go back unto the Land of Dreams,
And ways untrodden long;
I will go back unto the Land of Dreams
Which is the Land of Song.

And you, my love, shall guide me on the way,
For only you can tell
Where shine with gold beneath the golden day
The fields of asphodel.

And there together we shall never grow
Weary of wandering;
And oh, the unending joy that we shall know,
And how our hearts will sing!

TIDINGS

By T. F. Mitche

HE paced feverishly up and down outside the closed door, just as countless husbands have done and will continue to do. The suspense was terrible. At last, after what seemed an age, the door opened and a smiling, frock-coated gentleman came out.

The husband rushed forward breathlessly with questioning eyes.

"Congratulations, old man," said the frock-coated gentleman. "Absolute decree!"

THE GODDESS

By Charles T. Ryder

SHE glimmers by the waters in the dawn,
Her beauty lingers when the light is gone,
Over the world on every wind that blows
Her kisses float like petals from a rose.

She is the dew of earth, the wine, the fire,
She is the goal of wisdom and desire,
She is the cause, the boon, the balm, of strife,
The only magic at the heart of life.

IN a love affair what a man is jealous of is his successor; a woman of her predecessor.

WOMEN are moths and men fur coats.

ON A PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN AUGUST

By Thyra Samter Winslow

I

ALMA SCOTT did not want to go into town that Saturday morning. She preferred sitting on the porch and finishing Russell's new rompers, while she watched the children or chatted with the neighbours. But Dexter's mother had written to ask her to match some silk and lace right away. Alma liked doing things for Dexter's family. It seemed so comfortable for Dexter to belong to a big family and to be included in it.

She gave a last satisfactory pat to her hair as she put on her broad, flower-trimmed hat. She knew she was not beautiful, never had been. Still, for being thirty-two and the mother of three children, she felt she looked rather well. It would have been awfully hard on Dexter to have had a frumpy wife who let herself go. It made Alma glow pleasantly when he introduced her to people with such an evident air of complacency and pride.

She adjusted the smooth collar of her linen suit. She would catch the 10.14. The best shops were not open on Saturday in summer, but she knew she could find what she wanted on one of the side-streets and catch the 12.02 home. That would bring her back before Dexter came and they could have a nice half-holiday. Alma had never grown quite accustomed to the delights of being married to Dexter and being the mother of Junior and Russell and Alice.

Alice was asleep in the nursery. Alma bent over and touched, with one finger, one of Alice's little hands. Alice, at two, seemed such a wonderful baby. Junior and Russell, at seven and five, were sturdy and believable, but Alice made Alma think of precious, almost holy things. Of course, she knew Alice was just an ordinary little baby, but she liked keeping the rare feeling about her.

As she went downstairs, she noticed that the steps needed dusting. She'd do it as soon as she got home and not say anything to Monnie about it. After all, she was lucky having a maid who was good to the children, as Monnie was, even if she couldn't cook and wasn't awfully careful about housework.

Alma and Dexter Scott were paying off their mortgage and planning new living-room furniture for autumn. On Dexter's salary they felt they were doing well to afford even Monnie. Alma enjoyed cooking—plunging her hands into spongy dough, slicing apples for spicy pies, mixing up little cakes. It was even fun to mend, when Dexter and the children were the people to mend for.

Alma stepped into the kitchen. Monnie was finishing the dishes.

"Alice ought to sleep until I get back," she said. "If not, you'll give her her bath, won't you? And put on her pink rompers and keep her on the porch. And don't let Russell play in the puddles in the lot across the street. Need anything in town?"

Monnie didn't need anything, but she told Alma she'd "look out for everything just fine" and advised her to

hurry home, as she knew "the heat's something fierce in town."

On the porch, Alma called in the direction of the horse-chestnut tree, and Junior and Russell, the two Rice boys and the Britton girl came running up, rather grimy, to say that they were making mud pies with jelly moulds and that if Alma would only buy the brand of jelly with which the moulds came free it would be a real help. Junior and Russell promised to mind Monnie and not play in the puddle, and would Alma please bring them big lolly-pops on sticks, pink ones preferably?

Looking back at the house, as she walked down the pleasant green street, Alma gave a sigh of happiness, with just a little pain in it. It was too lovely. The white clapboard house with its green roof and green shutters seemed perfect. And Dexter and the children. Could it last? Was the always-present fear price enough? Alma knew these things were an undeserved accident. She wanted to keep them. If Dexter knew . . .

Things would end if Dexter knew. Still, Alma had been married for nine years and Dexter had not found out. For the millionth time Alma wished she had been able to tell him, or, best of all, that there had been nothing to tell.

She had gone over it so many times. Dexter had come from a little New England town and had kept the ideals of his family. Alma loved him for those very qualities of uprightness and severity and love of truth. She hoped Junior and Russell would inherit them. To Dexter, a good woman was a good woman. That's all there was to it. Alma liked his viewpoint—for him. But, because being married to him was the most wonderful thing that could happen, the fear of his finding out was a black border on the edge of her happiness. She sometimes thought it made the glow a bit more radiant.

It was the usual past that Alma was concealing.

Years before her marriage she had had the affair with Morgan Gilbert. The affair had not been ugly. It had caused Alma little real remorse. It had been easy enough for her to fall into and out of love at twenty. She had been an orphan, with a little money and a small ability for sketching. The art teacher at the boarding-school where her guardian had conveniently shelved her had exaggerated it into a talent. So, when the guardian had relinquished his guard and her money, Alma had gone to Paris to study.

In Paris she had fallen in love with Gilbert. They had a big room over the Luxembourg Gardens and had a pleasant year, quarrelling about Art and Life and enjoying the Paris of the students and the museums and little restaurants and gardens. Then Alma found that she wasn't going to be a genius, after all, and that she preferred America. Gilbert wasn't as sure of his ability and he preferred Paris. Alma had come to New York and got a place on a woman's magazine, doing sketches.

Then she had met Dexter Scott, dignified, grave, eight years older. Gilbert became a shadow in unreal days. She still remembered pleasantly his rough suits, his little affectations, his great pretences of sudden dislikes for certain people and things, odd reticences. Gilbert had had light, tumbly hair and a way of half closing his eyes and thin, artist's hands through which you could feel his moods. An ideal companion for idle days.

Alma remembered Gilbert as she remembered her whole youth. She did not fear him, of course. She had written of her marriage, and he had answered with a perfect letter. She even had little notes from him occasionally. Dexter knew him as an old friend of her student days.

Now, Dexter meant more to Alma than Gilbert could ever have meant. A story that, to Gilbert, would have been something for a whimsical comment would have been material for deep pondering to Dexter. Her past, to Dexter, would have been unexplainable, unforgivable, a barrier which would have destroyed any possible future companionship.

Alma felt fairly secure, after nine years. In France, people had hardly known her name—a little Roumanian who had gone back to Bucharest, a Cuban boy studying music, a South American or two, French students from the provinces—few Americans who could remember her—except Charlie Sheets.

Sheets was unpleasant to think about. It was only because Gilbert had been so good-natured that they had known him at all. Even Gilbert had agreed that Sheets was "a most tremendously bad egg who ought to roll along," and yet, because Sheets amused him Gilbert bought meals for him and listened to his stories. Sheets was white-faced and had damp-looking hair. His nose was a bit crooked, "where someone once biffed him a good one," Gilbert had said. Still, Alma felt that, if she feared him enough, she was safe. He was the only one who could hurt her. He borrowed money and wrote the wrong kind of letters and said things, experimented. He thought he had to live, some way.

II

Alma caught the 10.14 at the little white Beechwood station with her usual little prayer that "everything would be all right." She reached New York half an hour later. She walked rapidly to Sixth Avenue. The elevated roared by, the air reeked with a dozen odours. And yet Dexter came into town and never complained, so she and the children could stay where it was cool and sweet.

She did her shopping as quickly as she could and sent the things by parcels post. She was as pleasant as she could be to the salesgirls. Poor girls, with their blouses clinging to them—she had Dexter and the children and the cottage.

She hurried to catch the 12.02, pausing at a corner to straighten her hat.

Someone was holding out his hand to her. She heard a thin laugh—and looked into the face of Charlie Sheets.

Sheets was thinner and more stoop-shouldered. He wore, even on this hot day, a black felt hat, which he pushed back on his head.

"Don't tell me you're not Alma Russell?" he asked.

"I can't tell you I wasn't," she smiled, "though my name isn't Russell any more. I'm married."

"That so? World seems to be treating you pretty good, eh? Where you living?"

Alma told him. If she had had a little time to think she might have made up something. She was really too afraid to attempt to.

"In the country. Commuter? Husband and children and everything? Ever hear anything from Morgan Gilbert?"

She said she heard occasionally, and that Gilbert was still in Paris.

"Sticks to the old life. Sometimes I wish I had. And here you are, all settled down, a respectable married lady. Those were the days, in Paris. You can't get away with things like that in America. I always say, 'Give me the Continent.' Here they are so damn provincial. Now, take your case . . ."

Alma listened. Perhaps Sheets would just—talk—and go away. . . .

Still, if he thought she had money—He had little games, blackmail—intrigue. Here he was, in Sixth Avenue—and Beechwood was only half an hour away. Finally she told him she had a train to catch.

"What's your hurry?" he detained her. "It's not often I get to see an old friend in New York. You know, I never thought you and Gilbert would stick it out. What does your husband think of it? Is he a Bohemian, too?"

Alma shuddered at "Bohemian," at Sheets' mention of Dexter.

"No, Mr. Scott doesn't care about—about Art. He is older than I am and quite settled, a business man. I've been so busy with my home. I've given up Art, too."

"Busy with your home! A great little transformation, Alma. I believe I'll come out and see how you're fixed. The old man won't object?"

"I—Mr. Scott is rather nervous. We don't have company a great deal—"

"Oh, that's all right. Treat me like

one of the family. Say, I bet you've never spilled that Paris affair at all, have you? I thought not. Don't worry, I won't spill the beans. I'm your friend, if you treat me right. You know Charlie Sheets. Say—the good times I used to have with Gilbert! 'Them was the good old days,' eh, girlie? Going to be home to-morrow? My idea of nothing to do is to spend Sunday in town with the thermometer breaking out of the glass. I'll probably have to stick in town all summer waiting for a proposition. One of these waiting games—may break any time in six months—you know how that is. But I'm a good little waiter. I need the money. You know little Charlie—just about to spend his last cent, when someone comes along and keeps him from starving to death. The high cost of giving, eh?"

Alma listened as he ran on about fortunes nearly made, the things he had done, tricky, exciting, too. She saw him writing her address and the Sunday trains in a greasy, black-bound notebook.

"Look out for little Charlie around three. A cup of tea—or something stronger if you're stocked up . . . Oh, all right, no offence. Want to meet the Mister and the kiddies. I won't spill anything—leave it to me. Don't go to any trouble, I'm home-folks, satisfied with anything."

Alma got away finally. She missed the 12.02 and had to wait half an hour. In the waiting-room she trembled, tried to think. She felt defiled. It had come. Worse, even, than she had expected.

She had worried so—hoped things would be all right. Before Junior was born, she had worried, most of all—for fear that Junior—in some way— But Junior was strong and healthy and normal. So was Russell. Alice—Alma didn't like to think of Alice, now.

Charlie Sheets was coming out to-morrow! Gilbert had enjoyed Charlie, poked fun at him, given him small amounts of money, fed him. Dexter wasn't that sort. Dexter was a bit narrow, though Alma didn't mind. Dexter didn't loan money nor poke fun. Dexter liked only people of his own set. He wouldn't understand why she had invited Sheets nor allowed him to talk in his disrespectful, cheap way. She couldn't change Sheets—nor get rid of him. He would have found her out, once he had seen her, she felt, even if she hadn't told him her name or address.

This one call would be all right—an old friend whom she hadn't seen since she was in Paris. But Sheets wouldn't be satisfied with calling once, when he saw the comforts of the little home. He would drop in, uninvited, for meals or week-ends. Dexter would ask her to discourage the visits—how Sheets would sneer at that! Or Dexter would try to get rid of Sheets himself. In either case, Sheets would tell—just enough to spoil everything. She couldn't give up Dexter and the children. She couldn't keep them—with Sheets. He was coming to call—to-morrow!

III

When she left the train at Beechwood she stopped at the drug-store for lolly-pops—she had forgotten to get the larger ones in town. She bought groceries for over Sunday. How little and clean and unreal Beechwood looked! A puff, a giant hand, could crumble its neatness into nothing. Or would it stay—and only she disappear?

The boys had whole rows of moulded mud cakes to show her. How long it seemed since she had left them! She kissed them, holding each little body close to her. What warm, sturdy little bodies they were!

She was arranging the salad when Dexter got home. How fine he was—and good!

"Nice and cool out here," he said. "I think I'll go up and change before eating. Did my other Palm Beach suit get back from the laundry?"

"It's on your bed."

"Fine! Nothing like a shower and a cool suit on a day like this. It's sweltering in town."

"I know. I went in. I got the silk your mother wanted."

"You poor child! You should have let it go. I'm going to write mother and Belle. They are everlastingly sending you on errands."

"Don't say anything to them, please. I like going. You know they haven't any choice at all in Gatesville."

"I don't like to see you wear yourself out. I don't know when I've seen you so pale. Let Monnie fix things. Sit down—I brought home two new magazines with the papers."

Alma finished getting luncheon. She heard Dexter splashing in the bathroom—a pleasant sound, fresh and clean, like Dexter. He came down, his hair plastered back, but with tired circles under his eyes. He had worked hard during the summer.

Alice had had her bath and her nap. In her pink rompers, with the cross-stitched bunnies, she sat in the high chair, whose tray bore the dents of the spoons of Junior and Russell. The boys' faces were shiningly clean. What a nice family! Would they stop, these peaceful days?

Alma could think only of Sheets. She knew she had to say something about him. She and Dexter told each other all of the little happenings of their day.

"I—I nearly forgot," she started in bravely, "I—I met an old friend of mine—used to know him in Paris—Charlie Sheets. He knew me right away. I—asked him to come out to-morrow afternoon."

"Glad you did." Dexter was cordial. "Living in New York? The city is no place to spend Sunday, days like these. Did you know him well?"

"Not awfully. Rather peculiar. You won't care for him. He's rather a tramp, been every place, really."

"He may be interesting, this time. It isn't as if we had to see a great deal of him."

What could she do, if Sheets wanted to keep on calling?

After luncheon she helped Monnie with the dishes. The boys played hop-scotch on the sidewalk. She and Dexter sat under the horse-chestnut tree. Dexter talked and Alma tried to listen. All through the afternoon ran the black line of Charlie Sheets. He was coming to-morrow—to spoil her tight little world. She must keep these things that were hers.

The Brittons came in at five, and Monnie brought out some iced tea and little cakes and the children came in to get two cakes apiece. The flowering bushes seemed to close them in a lovely cup. And Charlie Sheets was coming to-morrow.

Dinner passed. After dinner, when Alice and the boys were in bed, Alma and Dexter went to see the Moores, who lived on the next block, to ask about little Dick's leg. He had hurt it jumping off an unfinished barn. He was better.

On the way home Dexter said:

"We are awfully lucky, Alma. Alice and Junior have never been ill at all—outside of that eruption Russell had on his foot, in spring, they've really had nothing. The way other children are always catching things . . ."

"Tap wood," Alma attempted a laugh and tapped the nearest tree.

"You're a great one for superstition," Dexter smiled. "I believe you are afraid not to qualify things. Yet I don't know anyone who is happier—you make us all happy. Tired to-night, are you?"

"I'll be all right after I've had some sleep."

But Alma didn't sleep.

She lay in the little gray bed next to Dexter's bed and tried to think. That didn't help. She was powerless. Occasionally, during the night, she reached over and touched Dexter, to be sure that he was there, real. Three times she tiptoed in to see Alice in the nursery, and the boys. They were all asleep. Monnie was probably asleep, upstairs. Life went on as it always went on. To-morrow was Sunday—Charlie Sheets was coming to call.

Perhaps he would just talk, in his coarse, sneering way, have a glass of tea—and leave. Maybe she would never see him again! It might be as simple as that. But Alma knew Sheets.

She would try to appeal to him—if he said anything. Maybe, if he saw the children, how dear they were, and Dexter . . . She'd do her best.

She did not sleep all night. She was bathed and dressed before Alice woke up. She helped the boys with their baths and put them into clean linen suits, which showed their little round, brown knees. How dear they were, the sturdy, muscular little legs! And Alice, fragile, with her little flower hands.

Breakfast, then, and the Sunday papers, and Sunday-school for the sons. Dinner, with a treat of ice-cream with marshmallow sauce. Dishwashing in the kitchen with Monnie and the making of little sandwiches for tea, while Dexter started a new book he'd been wanting to read. Reading, then, trying to read, on the porch, near Dexter. She went over each paragraph four or five times, then closed the book over her finger—and waited.

"Warm?" asked Dexter. "You shouldn't have bothered so, getting dinner. Not that the dinner wasn't good—but anything satisfies us, you know. What time is that chap coming?"

"On the 3.47, I think. Any minute, now."

"Shall I walk to the station?"

"Don't go." Her voice was shrill. She couldn't let him meet Sheets alone. "He'll find the house. He's been all over the world—he won't have any difficulty locating a little house in Beechwood."

Charlie Sheets came up the walk.

IV

"'Lo, folks," he called out.

He looked a little better, a fresh collar, but his suit spotted and unpressed, his shoes unshined.

"You've got it pretty soft here," Sheets said as he tossed his black hat on the wicker table and accepted one of the porch chairs. "You never told me, yesterday, you were this well fixed. Most folks brag. Getting modest, isn't she?" His eyes swept Alma's possessions.

"A house is all right for some," a few minutes later; "I'm not one to settle down. Matrimony never appealed and I'm glad I never tried it. It's like apples, you can't tell from the outside whether you've picked one that's bad at the core. If you're not tied down to a woman, you know where you stand. Now, once, three years ago, when I was in Korea . . ."

Alma saw Dexter frown a trifle. But Sheets talked well and he tried to be entertaining, now. He told things other travellers did not tell, of Japan, China, the East Indies. If his stories showed his unscrupulousness, his petty craftiness, they were, too, full of colour and life and interest. He inserted pinpricks for Alma, mockeries of the things she cared most about.

Monnie came to tell Dexter there was a telephone call for him. As soon as the door slammed after him Sheets' jocularity ceased. He leaned close to Alma.

"I—I hate to ask you this," he said, "honest I do, and I didn't want to say anything in front of the old man, but—the truth is, I'm dead broke. I haven't heard from that business deal—may not hear for another month, and you're the only soul I know in town. It was a piece of good luck, bumping into an old friend like you, wasn't it? I—I don't like to borrow, Alma, but can you slip me fifty before I go this afternoon? I'll hand it back as soon as that deal goes through. There's big money in it. You know me. I'm acting like a gentleman, out here, you know. Not a word to spoil your little game. If—if you could loan me enough to see me through—"

"Charlie, I haven't got that much money in the house. That's the truth." It was truth. Dexter deposited his salary in the bank, each week, and gave his wife a check for the things she needed. She spent as little as she could, for the money that was left went for insurance, payments on the house and new furniture. Alma always had a little money saved from her household expenses, but there never was as much as fifty dollars unaccounted for. Dexter knew where her money went—she liked

to show what a good manager she was. Fifty dollars! And this was the first—he'd keep on . . .

"You've got it in the bank, haven't you?"

"Why—I—yes—"

"Be a good sport, Alma. Don't be a tightwad. What's got into you? I'd do more than that for an old friend. Why, right now—look what I'm doing for you . . . imagine the sensation if I began to talk—but I'm your friend. I haven't a cent—that's the truth of the matter."

Blackmail. Just what she'd been afraid of. Dexter's money! Of course Sheets would tell, if he didn't get it. He'd watch things crumble, and then, in another country, months from now, tell a group about her—an amusing incident for an afternoon's conversation.

She smiled mechanically. How she hated Sheets! She hadn't imagined she could hate anyone so much. Ugly and dirty—and here he was, on her little, clean porch—asking for money!

"I'll get it for you," she said.

"To-morrow?"

"All right."

"Meet me downtown and give it to me?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Any place you say."

"I'll telephone you around eleven in the morning. Give me your 'phone number." He took the greasy notebook from his coat pocket, turned the pages, added the telephone number.

Dexter came back on the porch. The message had been about a business telegram one of the men at his office had thought he might like to know about, he explained.

The boys, with a great clumping of sandals, ran up the porch steps. They became self-conscious and unusually polite, as they were introduced. Alma noticed Russell's sandals. They were quite wet.

"You've wet your feet in the puddle," she said.

"They aren't wet much," he said; "it won't hurt."

Alma turned to her guest.

"You will excuse me, won't you? Just a second. This small boy had a skin eruption, a sort of eczema. We're just getting it cured. He mustn't get his feet wet. I'll slip up and get him into dry socks. I'll see about tea, while I'm gone."

"Don't bother about anything for me," said Sheets politely. "I'm just plain home-folks."

Alma didn't like leaving Dexter and Sheets alone, though she knew Sheets would not say too much—just yet. His stories—but Dexter would miss half of the things he would say.

In the bathroom, Alma took off Russell's small socks. His feet were damp and one looked a little red. Dr. Byers had said the eczema might come back any time. She bathed his foot with a lotion the doctor had given her, dried it with careful pats of a soft bath towel, powdered it and put on a pair of clean white socks and another pair of sandals.

"You'd better take a little of this medicine, too, so your foot won't start hurting again," she said.

Very carefully she poured two drops of a colourless liquid from a small bottle into a glass with water in it. Russell swallowed it with a wry face and scampered downstairs.

Corking the bottle, Alma remembered things Dr. Byers had told her. He was an old man who liked to talk and sometimes, when his practice was light, he would chat with Alma about interesting cases he had had, about medicines and their effects. Alma remembered what he had said about the medicine she held in her hand.

"Take that Fowler's solution, now—arsenic, you know. Same stuff—Paris green. Thousands die of it, every year. Funny poison—you can usually detect it in the stomach, but what of that? Poor old down-and-outers take it. Sometimes they get to a hospital in time—sometimes they die without medical aid. If a case dies twenty-four hours after it gets to a hospital they perform a post-mortem. Autopsy shows arsenic poison. What of it? Police can't hunt up the

suicide—or murder—evidence of every down-and-outer who dies peculiarly—why, you can't even blame most of them for wanting to die. Poor old things don't even get a line in the newspapers. And so it goes.

"The way you give it to Russell, it is safe enough, of course. But take this stuff—looks like water, and a teaspoonful dropped into a cup of coffee—tasteless—and pop—the man's gone. Unless he knows, at the start, there's not much hope. It's a slow poison—doesn't start to act for a couple of hours. Then the fellow starts getting pains and nausea—then, unless someone knows what to do right away . . ."

Alma found herself downstairs. She found the bottle still in her hand. Sheets . . . coffee . . . safety. . . . Horrible, of course. But he wouldn't start to suffer while he was there—for over two hours. . . . Peace and happiness and contentment. Contentment—if you kill someone? Why not? Nerves and all that? Nonsense. If she didn't—kill him. . . . Oh, well . . .

In the kitchen, Monnie was starting to put tea glasses on the tray.

"I've an idea," said Alma brightly. "I think I'll serve coffee instead. We've had iced tea every day. We'll make instantaneous coffee and put the ice right in."

Dr. Byers had said coffee. Surely cold would be as good as hot.

She opened a new box of her nicest cakes, added the plate of sandwiches, which had been kept fresh under a dampened napkin.

"Monnie, will you get the coffee now—it's in the little tin box in the pantry," she called.

A teaspoonful! Quite steadily, Alma reached for a teaspoon, as if she were doing the most usual thing in the world. She poured, carefully, the Fowler's solution into the spoon, tipped the spoonful into one of the glasses—the one with the chipped handle. Then she frowned earnestly—and added half a teaspoonful more for good measure. How easy it was! She corked the bottle, closed her hand over it.

"Monnie," she went into the pantry, "don't touch the tray. I want to fix the coffee myself. Please call Russell, won't you, and tell him to stay inside the yard. I don't want his feet wet again."

She knew what she was doing. It seemed nothing at all. She ran upstairs, put the bottle into the medicine cabinet, ran down. Monnie had not touched the glasses.

As Alma made the coffee she heard Alice, just waking up.

"Run and get her, won't you, Monnie?" she said, "and put on her little rompers with the butterflies. Thanks so much, Monnie. I don't know what I'd do without you."

Alma carried out the tray. Sheets was talking about South Africa.

"So they sold all sixteen of those girls. I said, 'Nothing doing.' If matrimony gets the best of me, the girl will be white, exterior view, anyhow. I left the next day. A fellow named Jasper—"

"Won't you have some coffee?" Alma asked prettily. She put the tray carefully on the wicker table, handed Sheets the glass with the chipped handle. She would throw it away afterwards. One of the children might cut a finger on it.

They drank the coffee. Alma found she enjoyed eating the little cakes! Her heart was thumping rather unpleasantly. She saw that Sheets drank all of his coffee. She took the glasses away and brought more coffee. She didn't use the chipped-handled glass this time, but left it, carefully rinsed, in the sink.

Monnie brought Alice, fresh and cool and fragrant. Alma shuddered as Sheets touched one of the tiny hands. Yes, Monnie could take Alice out in her buggy, if she was careful.

An hour passed. And in two hours . . . Dr. Byers had said . . .

Then Alma remembered that Sheets had her address in the notebook in his coat pocket. They mustn't have her name—start investigating—asking her things. It was hard for her to breathe, now. How could she get the notebook? He—he—thought he was going to meet her—in the morning. . . .

She must do something. His coat—if she could get that—

"You ought to be married, Charlie," she said, "look at your buttons." She pointed to them, giggled. "Nearly off. A wife wouldn't let that happen. To show you what a friend you have I'll sew them on for you."

She saw Dexter's surprise. Dexter didn't like coquetry. She would try to explain later. Before Sheets could protest she ran upstairs, was down with her sewing-basket. She stood, waiting, while he took his coat off.

What a terrible coat it was! Unpleasant! She sat in a chair a little away from them and sewed on a button. She looked at Sheets. He caught her eyes and smiled. She sewed on another button. Looked at him. He was not looking at her. She turned away, got out the notebook, found the page with her name on it, started another button. The coat hid the notebook now. She tore out the page, put the book back into the pocket, crumpled the address into a little ball, put it into her mouth. She breathed deeply.

"There, now," she shook out the coat. "That's better."

"A great wife you've got, Scott. Does she go around—doing little kindnesses—to everyone?"

"She is very kind," said Dexter, a bit heavily. Alma knew he was not pleased.

They talked, then, ten minutes, fifteen, half an hour.

Nearly two hours now! She must get rid of him!

What if—if—if she'd given Sheets the wrong cup? Dexter looked pale. Still, the day was warm. She felt dizzy, a little nauseated. Oh, it couldn't be . . .

She glanced at her wrist. There was a train in fifteen minutes. If he caught that . . .

"I do hate to hurry you," she said, as lightly as she could, "but we commuters have got to think of trains. We live by them, you know. There's one in fifteen minutes and we've got a stupid neighbourhood engagement to-night that would bore you most awfully. So, if you don't catch the next train . . . It's just a minute's walk to the station. We'll walk with you, if you like."

"I think I shall take the slight hint," drawled Sheets. "I'm tired, anyhow—this heat. . . . I'll say, though, you're fixed up fine out here. You bet I'll be back again soon."

"Of course," said Alma quickly.

Dexter went into the house to get his hat. While he was gone Sheets said:

"Say, Alma, you oughtn't to have sewed on those buttons. The old man didn't like it. You'll give yourself away—doing things like that. Sure I can count on you—to-morrow?"

"Yes," said Alma wearily, "'phone me at eleven."

They walked to the station. Dexter pointed out to Sheets who lived in the big corner house—the new house with the red roof. It seemed silly, Alma thought, to tell Sheets things—he didn't need to know—anything—he had learned about all he was going to learn. Poor Sheets—he hadn't got much out of living—why, he wasn't much over forty, now.

The train was a few minutes late. Sheets jumped aboard and waved a farewell. Alma and Dexter walked back to the house.

V

Alma shivered slightly and yet the air seemed unbelievably sultry, thick. She stumbled a little as she walked. What if she had taken the wrong coffee? Or Dexter?

"How do you feel?" she asked.

"Quite all right. Why? You look pale. You don't like Sheets, do you? I hope he doesn't carry out his promise of coming here often. He isn't the type I care about knowing. And, dear, I don't like to criticize, but it didn't seem dignified, sewing buttons on another man's coat on Sunday."

"I know," Alma was properly contrite, "but he did seem so alone, so dishevelled."

"Of course—only, in the future—"

"Don't worry, I shan't make a habit of it."

On the porch, Junior and Russell were waiting. She gave them some sandwiches and little cakes and big tumblers of milk. She called to Dexter, who was out under the chestnut-tree.

"I think I'll go to bed, dear. "I'm 'all in.' The heat, I'm afraid. Monnie will be back with Alice, in a minute, and put the children to bed."

Alma took a shower, slipped into a thin gown, hurried into bed. She heard friendly little sounds. Monnie had come back with Alice. The white ruffled curtains swayed with a little new breeze. She felt better. How was Charlie Sheets feeling? Perhaps she would never know. Poor old Sheets! She was sorry he had to suffer. He seemed farther away than he had seemed months ago. If only—no one found out—found out—found out—

Still, she felt drowsy and comfortable and safe. Tired. Sheets—three hours—and Dr. Byers had said two—well, he had got away in time . . . if only he didn't call in someone or suspect—he was that sort—suspicious—

She—why she was . . . she couldn't think it, even. She wasn't fit for Dexter and the boys—and Alice. But, then, she never had been, if it came to that. If she were only safe . . . she'd try to make up for things. What if there was something—after you die? No use worrying about that . . . time enough . . .

It was morning when she woke up, and pleasantly cool. As always, she bathed and dressed and took care of the children. Would anything happen? What could happen?

Alma enjoyed breakfast. She kissed Dexter good-bye and told him, truthfully, how much better she felt. She helped Monnie in the kitchen and sat down to wait. Wait? Would the telephone ring?

Alma swept and dusted the living-room. Two of her friends ran up to chat with her. But the telephone did not ring at eleven! Dexter rang up, as usual, at noon. The telephone did not ring again that day.

A couple of weeks later Dexter happened to think of Sheets.

"Do you know," he said, "I didn't like the way that man acted, impudent, too much at home. I didn't want to say much at the time, because he was an old friend of yours. You haven't seen him again, have you? He said he'd be back, you know."

"No," said Alma, and she was surprised at her own casualness. "I thought perhaps we'd see him again. But he's an odd chap. You can't depend on him. He's probably in another part of the world by this time. We may not ever see him again."

They never did.

A MONOMANIAC is one who is crazy on one subject as distinguished from the average man who is crazy on all subjects.

A MAN sometimes marries to keep some other fellow from making love to his girl. The scheme, alas! doesn't always work.

THE MAGNIFICENT MAJOR

By Clarkson Crane

HE felt very contented when he kissed Amélie that morning, standing in the doorway of their apartment. He left her there and walked down the stairs, one fat hand on the banister, the other adjusting his cap; and he could not help looking toward her again when he reached the landing. She was bending forward slightly, smiling down at him, her négligée hanging loosely about her.

Pausing, he winked at her with both eyes, his round face collapsing into creases; she smiled, putting her head on one side, and tossed forth an English word: "Goooood-bye!"

Then Major McGee walked heavily downward, humming to himself and thinking of her.

Amélie's hair was henna'd; he knew that. But she had a pleasant way of pursing her red lips, and then of laughing, without much sound, her mouth tightly drawn. And there was something about her eyes—as if they were swimming.

On the sidewalk, he returned the driver's salute and climbed into the car. It was too bad that one had to be so early at the office. He felt sleepy and his mind seemed a little duller and more passive than usual. He cleared his throat when the car moved, yawned with a tiny hoot, and fell to watching the back of his driver, a thin-faced youth who had been for many months at the front. He was a "nice young feller," the Major thought, and very useful, because he spoke French perfectly and knew every alley in Paris.

When the car hummed across the Place de l'Etoile the Major, leaning back against the cushions with one heavy arm arranged along the back of the seat, sighed deeply from massive content. Fifteen years as sergeant in the regular army had stored within him raw material for innumerable sighs like that. Then the car turned, and the smooth Champs Elysées reached away before him, gray under the mist.

He descended at the corner of the Rue de la Boëtie, wishing to make a purchase in the pharmacy, and told the driver that he would walk to the office. A moment later, when he turned up the street, he caught a glimpse of himself in a shop window: a thick figure, erect, shoulders well back, abdomen too prominent, gray hair under the overseas cap. He could not help looking again, into another window. Then he shook his head: there was something in the air that morning depressing him, in spite of it all.

As he reached a corner, two privates went by in heavy shoes, talking to each other. Major McGee bellowed: "Halt!" Then, "Didn't anyone ever tell you that you're supposed to salute an officer?"

The two privates, with a quick glance at each other, came to attention, their arms hanging close to their stained uniforms and both said: "Yes, sir."

"Well, then, why didn't you?"

"We didn't see you, sir."

When he was relating the incident a few minutes later in the office, Major McGee said:

"Of course, it isn't me I care about them saluting. It's the uniform."

He still was hot about the face and neck; but an agreeable satisfaction pervaded him. Often he felt the same quiet pleasure when he remembered

that he was in France fighting for civilization.

For an hour, then, he read the Paris edition of the New York *Herald*, advancing ponderously down the columns, nodding over the advertisements, his lips moving. Once Riley, the little sergeant, came to him with a question. Major McGee looked after him, when he had gone, affectionately. He too was a "nice young feller," who always did his work, and never caused trouble.

When the sergeant vanished, he found himself staring through the window into the sullen gray of the winter morning. Across the street, an American flag, dangling wetly down the wall of a house, reminded the Major gradually of what he had seen the day before, and urged him relentlessly to tell someone all about it. He moved his head.

Lieutenant-Colonel Dent walked by, going toward his desk near the window. An office sergeant before the war, he carried now many obsequious years that made his shoulders droop, and about army paper work he knew everything. But the enlisted men always referred to him as a "pussy-footer" and when he passed them, his narrow head forward, his thin lips bent in a steady smile, glanced at one another and loathed him.

Major McGee said, half rising:

"I was in the Crillon yesterday, and I saw them all—all the great folks. I could 'ov touched the President. He was only this far away." He lifted two fat, parallel hands.

Lieutenant-Colonel Dent answered: "I was there too," and went away smiling.

Major McGee said weakly: "Was you?" and sat down again.

The fire, with languid flames on a slope of bright red coals, made him feel sleepy, and he leaned back in his chair, thinking of Amélie. He had learned so much from her!

Indeed, he had partly demolished the language barrier.

He spoke French, in his thick-tongue way, as if he were trying to put together a verbal puzzle composed of many delicate pieces. He thrust out his lips, made irrelevant sounds, and through it all beat time with one fat hand, holding two fingers extended.

When he had concocted a sentence, he always laughed, his red face creasing, and awaited Amélie's comment. She said: "*C'est très bien!*" told him that he had made progress, and, if they were more or less unobserved, patted his cheek with her soft, pallid hand. Then, throwing back his head, and half closing his eyes, he began again, his fingers making patterns in the air.

Amélie had learned little English—only expressions that the Major used frequently, such as "Sure!" and "Oh, Boy!" One evening when he returned from the office, she put a hand on either side of his face and whispered, "Fat babee!" They laughed wildly, his voice gruff, hers very shrill. She always said "Fat babee!" after that, whenever conversation slackened. And they always laughed.

He smiled as he recalled the way she pronounced it. Then he saw that the hand of the clock on the office wall was creeping toward eleven, and he began to think of *déjeuner*. (He always used the French word.) Amélie had persuaded him to take in the morning nothing but coffee and bread; and as a result, during the last hour before noon, he could think only of eating and only of digestion during the early part of the afternoon.

Fifteen minutes before closing time he left the office.

He did not see Amélie at noon: she was breakfasting that day with a relative in Passy; and he lunched alone in a small restaurant near the Champs Elysées. While he bent over his plate, concentrating on his food, the vague depression vanished; but while he was walking back to the office, the feeling returned, creeping even into the haze of digestion. Once, in a letter to his sister Mamie, who lived in Idaho, he had summed up the matter:

"I don't know what I'll do after peace is signed."

When he sat before his desk again,

he banished the subject and found comfort in remembering Amélie. Along with all the rest of it there was a motherly strain in her, which he had discovered one day coming home from the office with a headache. All the evening she had remained beside him, without speaking, replacing the wet towel upon his forehead. He smiled, leaning back in his chair.

And, throughout the afternoon memories and scattered feelings curled and played within him like smoke rising from a taper into the air of a draughty room.

Amélie noticed his gloom that evening when he opened the apartment door; and while he washed his hands, standing before the bowl in his rumpled shirt, she patted his cheek and stroked his bald head, trying to make him smile. When they sat opposite one another in a restaurant (the waiter had wheeled aside the table so that Major McGee might squeeze himself on to the brown leather cushion) she rested both elbows on the cloth and, placing a hand on either side of her mouth, whispered: "Fat babee!" He giggled, looking up, and blinked across at her. She was wearing a dark blue suit; and he noticed that her round hat covered most of the henna'd hair.

He gulped down the first glass of wine which the waiter poured out for him and drank the second more slowly. In the mirror, across the room, between two British officers, he could see the back of Amélie's head and a smooth bit of hair descending evenly on to her back. He kept glancing at it from time to time while they ate their fish; and once or twice he could not help leaning forward, with one hand in the air, to compose a remark in mooing French. He said:

"*Voulez-vous-doo-bifsteck,*" and then laughed, writhing in his seat and glancing toward a thin French lieutenant at the next table.

Amélie, in her rapid voice, began to tell all about Marie, the Passy cousin whom she had seen that morning. The husband of Marie, it appeared, was at Metz, a *pharmacine auxiliaire*, who delighted in postcards.

While Amélie talked, enumerating the cards she had seen, the Major kept looking into the mirror opposite. There, between the two British officers, he had discovered his own face, fat, red, smiling: when he moved to the left, it vanished; when he moved to the right, it vanished; but if he sat motionless, only wriggling his head, he could see it there, all alone, just as if it were resting on the shoulders of the two officers.

He waved broadly at a waiter who stood beside him with another bottle of Chambertin. Then, leaning back against the leather cushion, he moved his right hand in rhythm, opened his mouth, and made a sound like the rattling of a large clock before it strikes. At last the words came out, as a royal family emerges in triumph from wide-flung gates:

"*Il-fait-chaud.*"

Amélie said "*chut!*" and the two officers opposite glanced toward them.

When the Chambertin was all gone, Major McGee decided that he wanted champagne; and after he had finished a glass or two of it, he could not help leaning toward the young Frenchman who sat on the same cushioned seat a few feet away. He liked the French; they were all "nice fellers," and he thought Foch a "bright man." He said:

"You're aw right!"

Then the idea came to him, as quickly as possible, like a waterlogged stick rising in a stagnant pool. He said, lifting his voice:

"But who won the war?"

He pronounced the words vaguely, reminiscently, leaning toward the lieutenant all the while. He was a "nice young feller." Major McGee felt wistfully benevolent and wanted to pat his shoulder.

Drinking his second glass of Bénédictine, he looked toward Amélie, at her red lips, her eyes. She said "*chut*" once more; and he laughed. But he could not help saying whatever drifted across his mind, and now, because

stories were there, stories that he had heard, he opened his mouth and told them aloud, like a hag crouching before a fire crooning olden tales.

"Our boys advanced and the French couldn't keep up with 'em and left 'em alone. We stopped the Huns at Château-Thierry. We had to come over and show 'em how!"

Shaking his arm, Amélie was saying in her shrill voice:

"*Taisez-vous, taisez-vous. Ne criez pas, voyons!*"

Then, very quickly, she left the table, hurried away, and vanished into the dressing-room.

Everybody was looking at him now, the Major knew—all those pink, shimmering faces.

Great, tangled achievements floated in his brain: large docks with waving machinery: sewer systems never before contemplated; trains moved with boisterous rapidity; hills captured in four minutes which the French had attacked during four years—all the legends, emerging from crevices of the A. E. F., growing, buzzing, sticking to his mind like flies to fly paper, that made vast heroic shadows pose before him, and called him a child of a superior race.

He swayed to and fro, shaking his head.

The world was like a warm bath in which he rolled in limitless content. He pounded on the table, making the dishes rattle, and stretched his legs. Then, lifting his moist, happy face, he told them all:

"*We—won—the—war!*"

RONDO

By Leslie Nelson Jennings

I MADE my lass a daisy chain—
Sing hey, my cuckoo, sing—
If such, I said, do make her vain,
I'll keep the costlier thing!

I bought my lass a good brown dress—
Sing hey, my cuckoo, sing—
If such do teach her haughtiness,
I'll keep the costlier thing!

I gave my lass the kiss I'd vowed—
Sing hey, my cuckoo, sing—
But it was she that made me proud,
As any king!

COMPETITION is keen among women. That is why unmarried men wear a hunted look, and married men seem tame.

THE LAST PICTURE

By Paul Hervey Fox

I

BRANHAM felt that he had every right to be complacent. He often felt that way. Sometimes he urged the mood into life by directed thinking.

The large, softly-throbbing car rolled him away from luncheon at one of his clubs, where he managed a table to himself. His eyes gazed with a stolid satisfaction at the brisk chauffeur in front, at the sleek Japanese servant at his side, at the crowded street with the faces, faces, faces of seeking and of worry and despair. Yes, Branham told himself that he had done well.

He was fifty-five years old, and by his doctor's reckoning would see seventy-five. He had fortified an excellent constitution by an eternal watchfulness of his system. Should one drink water with one's meals? Should one use hot milk rather than cream in one's coffee? Should one use coffee at all? To questions like these Branham gave a concentration deliberate and solemn.

He was not unlikable, this rather florid, selfish man of fifty-five. He could be good company when he desired. He had intelligent eyes, a pleasant humour, and a large assurance.

Branham had nothing to do except to amuse himself; and he liked to amuse himself. A fancy had come over him to visit a small lodge of his in the mountains which he had not seen for upwards of three years. He had sent a telegram to the farmer who acted as caretaker, and with everything required, stored in packing-cases, was on his way.

Towards four in the afternoon the big car bounded up the slope of a hillside over a bad, dangerous road, and was lost to view in the crowded pine growth. It swept around a private drive and drew up before the doors of a compactly designed structure that had the air of a millionaire's shooting-box.

Branham wandered about, reviewing the appointments of the small building with a deep enjoyment. The walls were flanked with books in handsome bindings; over the floors were soft, rich rugs of golden tints that sang to the eye; the tobacco cabinet in the corner had preserved its charges perfectly; the medicine chest in the bathroom lacked nothing.

Branham fingered a favourite toothpaste lovingly. Dr. McCorkle had recommended it as the very best. Branham wondered sceptically if it really were the best. He was not sure. But that shaving cream that came from Paris, he was sure there. Very few people had a shaving cream like that!

The chauffeur was unloading supplies from the car. Tanna, the Jap boy, stood deferentially in the doorway with his head held at an angle of inquiry. Branham hesitated lovingly over a choice between iced tea with a squeeze of lime in it and some tall gin drink with ice and soda. He had been very careful at luncheon, he remembered, and he decided that he was entitled to the latter selection.

As, a little later, he sat in a deep chair in the round tower that, invisible itself, yet gave a view above the tangled shrubbery of a countryside, green, soothing, infinitely peaceful in the afternoon sun, Branham recurred again to his dominant thought. How clever

he had been! Or, if not that, how superior at least to the blind mass of men who had lost out through their too ready love for a woman, their faith in a man, their faith in a creed, in a colt, in a preposterous gamble.

He sipped his cool drink again, and his arm, circling in a gesture, as he put down the glass, struck the knob of a Renaissance table. He pulled at it with a vague curiosity, and a drawer slid out with a creak. Branham picked out of the dust one of those plump, leather-bound cases hinged with heavy brass that are familiar to American households as the family album.

Smiling, he began to turn the pages, visualizing, with the photographs serving only as aids, the faces of his father, of his mother, of random aunts and cousins and forgotten connections. At the very end of the volume he came upon four portraits of himself, the first that of a boy of nineteen, the last that of a man of thirty-three.

He turned to the first photograph of the group, with the sober, intent face, the curious costume, the hair lanky and straight, and the bold, innocent gaze. Yet in the eyes even then, there seemed some trace of that shrewd, direct understanding which had bought him what he wanted. Nineteen years old; thirty-six years ago!

He had been at college then, yes, he remembered well, that was the year he had chummed with Ted Holbrooke until Ted had come to grief. He could see again their room in the freshman dormitory, and feel again the thrill of that stormy night when Ted had fired his spirit with his words.

II

It was merely an episode, and Branham remembered it in three or four pictures.

What was the man's name—Murchison? Murchison, at any rate, was a freshman mathematics instructor. He was a thin, stooping man with a bad mouth. In the first semester he had passed only two or three of an entire class, and those unjustly.

His power was absolute, the power of a college professor over his own students, a thing autocratic and without reversal. Once Murchison had dropped a boy from the course at a careless whim; he delighted in all sorts of petty, malicious practices.

Something, perhaps, would have been done about the matter, had Ted Holbrooke, with his bright blue eyes and funny red hair, not taken the law into his own hands.

Marks had been posted mockingly upon a bulletin in the early afternoon, and that night Ted and a few others had gathered in Branham's room to talk things out.

"We've got to get rid of him!" Ted cried. "My father used to talk about avoiding servility and silence. Well, I'm going to. We've got to protest in a way they'll never forget. We'll hold a meeting of the whole class and go on strike! We can swing the engineers all right, and, anyway, the fellows who don't take Murchison in the course will join through sympathy. Are you with me?"

He was standing up at the time, a figure very intense, his eyes burning, his voice alive with the high enthusiasm of the rebel, of the born fighter.

Branham was among those who shouted out an assurance. He was stirred, his blood moved rapidly. He told himself this was a magnificent hour. Then, as they filed excitedly from the room out into the campus to spread the flame, he went into a corner for a cap. When he reached the doorway, he could hear the voices in the lower corridor, high-pitched, yet blending together into the confused, sullen sound of a mob.

Branham suddenly hesitated. In that instant he had a realization of the dangerous folly of Ted's plan. And if he, too, joined, he would be one of the leaders; he was at least no man for halfway measures. In the end he whistled queerly, threw his cap into the corner again, and went to his desk.

Later, he heard what happened that night; how Ted Holbrooke and a handful of others had gathered a hundred

boys or more. They had marched up to the President's house, and halted before the windows, howling delightedly:

"Down with Murchison! Down with Murchison!"

Then the door opened, and Ted Holbrooke and three of his lieutenants went inside.

And the next morning, Branham remembered the wide semi-circle of faces in the chapel, and the President's suave, cultured voice:

"In view of an unpardonable demonstration last evening, it has been decided that the following men shall be expelled from this college: Messrs. Edward Holbrooke, George G. Ryan, Arthur William Grieves . . ."

Branham had drawn in his breath sharply at that announcement. His instinct had been true; he had been saved from a blunder.

That afternoon Holbrooke came to his room to say good-bye. He was cocky and jaunty, and spoke of a wide, colourful variety of futures with a light-heartedness that was at times a little tremulous. Branham went into the hall for a moment, and when he returned, saw Ted Holbrooke with his head flung across his arms on the desk, crying like a girl.

Ted lifted his blurred eyes.

"Oh, damn!" he said in self-assertive masculinity. "Oh, damn, what an ass I must seem to you! It's just my father. This was his college, you know. He'll take it so rottenly. Not that he'll say anything. But he wanted me to do all the things that he did, and was so anxious . . ."

Branham stared hard. He was aware vaguely of the pain that Ted was suffering. He thought again of his own close escape. Pain! It was necessary to avoid that. Poor Ted! He must be hit hard to cry like a baby.

Thus had Branham seen the fruits of rebellion for the sake of justice. What matter if the hated Murchison did depart that year and the faculty was more particular henceforth in selecting instructors? It was necessary, first of all, to protect oneself, wasn't it? And right and wrong were queer things, hard to distinguish at times. It was better to play safe.

In due course Branham became manager of the football team, and President of the Junior Cass, and his fame in the college survived for almost two reunions after his graduation.

Across a bridge of thirty-six years, Branham, the successful man of affairs, came back to the flattering present. He turned the page of the album, and his attention fell upon the portrait of a young man of twenty-four with a somewhat serious expression and eyes that told that the lesson of compromise was by now ably learned.

III

At twenty-four, Branham had filled, inconspicuously enough, the position of a bond salesman. In those days he lived in New York in what was then uptown, sharing a small apartment with a man named John Long, whom he had known vaguely in college.

Long was a grave young man with a melancholy face but a good-humoured, sympathetic mouth. He and Branham had tastes in common. Long loved to hammer copper and brass, and make beautiful cups and simple, handsome ornaments out of silver and inexpensive stones. He was always saving up painfully to buy some new gas-torch, some new implement.

Branham's taste was of a more inventive order. He loved presses and woodcuts, and had a singular gift for the details of lithography. He liked to smoke his pipe and listen to Long, when the latter, at times wildly rhetorical, pictured a future in which his and Branham's clerkship should be sundered, and they would set up in a common craftsmanship.

He had come home one evening to find Long waiting for him with a manner that spoke of a laboured repression. Over dinner in a nearby dingy restaurant, Long told his news. He had secured backing for his hopes in the form of an unofficial partner, a man who

loved fine things for their own sake and wished to pose as a patron. This man had put a farm of his in New Jersey at Long's disposal, offered him three good workmen as assistants and stood ready to furnish funds and publicity.

"It's our chance," said Long in his quick, whispery voice. "It's come as I said it would. Nick, old man, we're made. Of course it doesn't mean riches or anything of that sort. And he's not very persistent, this chap. He's likely enough the sort to back on us when he gets tired of the whim. But we can make our start!"

"Jingoes!" said Branham. "It's—it's great!"

He lit a cigarette and clenched his fist. Here was the opportunity to work at what he loved.

Then he made an odd remark. It came out so unexpectedly that he himself was astonished. For he had not even thought of hesitating. Yet now he said:

"I think I'll take a walk, John, before deciding. If you don't mind, I want to—I want to think this thing over."

He took a very long walk. He was hesitating again, weighing the emotional desire with what life had taught him invariably resulted from a fulfilled emotion. His bond salesmanship had grown hateful; and there seemed nothing ahead, no future, no prospects, not anything. And yet if he only waited, something would turn up, he would find his opportunity. If he joined forces with Long, such and such a thing would be his career. If he didn't—?

His attention alighted upon the entrance of a smart restaurant he was passing. He had dined sparingly out of a required economy. He thought irrelevantly that it would be wonderful to order as he liked, to dine with some charming woman in a costly gown with pearls at her delicate throat, and then to the play, and afterwards drive home in a hansom himself.

A crowded trolley, filled with humdrum folk, banged past. Branham gritted his teeth in a sudden resolve. He wanted the respect of all these people, and the pleasant things they had to offer, more than he wanted his own respect. He laughed softly to himself. He would be clear-headed. He would put aside this ensnaring illusion.

"I think I'll stay where I am," he told his friend later, when he came in. "I think I'll look around a little more, John."

"I—I see," answered Long unsteadily in the darkness of the apartment corridor.

Looking back now over time, Branham was aware that he had made no mistake. It was Long who had done that. He had met him casually only a few months ago, stopping his machine to call to the rather shabby figure on the pavement.

A man of his own age, with a tired, kindly face, who toiled at small orders for obscure silversmiths—that was Long. And the most pitiful part of it was that Long did not seem to realize his own pathos.

With a little smile Branham turned the page of the album. Before him was the likeness of a man of twenty-eight, already growing in assurance, with a hard, determined line about his mouth, very evidently a force to be reckoned with. Twenty-eight years old; it was then when he had known Richie Curtis, when he had known Stella Norreys!

IV

He saw himself again as he drove over the forest road on that night when brooding clouds had gathered in the west. He was wearing a round bowler hat, and a thick white stock. Recalling that costume, which the sweep of fashion had seemed to make so queer, so amusing, he felt as if the things that had happened then had happened in an age remote and artificial. And yet—this little memory was, of all his memories, the most vivid.

It was a rendezvous, of course, and he, the young man with the bowler hat, told himself that to-night, down by the boathouse on the water, he would take

Stella Norreys in his arms, and ask her to share his life, his hopes.

And, thinking of these hopes, his brow grew frowning.

Two years before he had picked his chance, and entered, humbly enough, a small transportation company which, with a few barges, freighted coal up and down the canals. Branham saw his way clear to a long grasp and power if only he could secure the capital to buy a controlling interest.

A vacation, after a hard year, had thrown him into a meeting with the girl called Stella Norreys. Her gentleness, her innate dignity, put her for him above and apart. She was as unsophisticated as a little child; he could read her actions like a book; and he knew that his accounts of the merciless struggles of business and of the glitter of life in the sprawling town with its hotels, its palaces, its theatres, and its restaurants where money was tossed about like dust, where men killed each other upon a pretext (or so the newspapers said), where there was perpetual excitement, fear, and a hectic happiness, were to her as full of thrill and mystery as the Arabian Nights.

Stella had a lover, though he never spoke that word, when Branham found her in that vacation interlude. Young Richie Curtis, with his remarkably clear-cut face and tumbled black hair, was for her nothing more than a strange-tempered diffident comrade.

The horse, a mettled one, pounded on over dead leaves, and presently Branham dismounted, and tied him to a sapling. He advanced across the path that led downwards to the lake, and saw her standing there, a brooding figure in white, part of the moonlight mood.

Branham stepped cautiously, and when at last she whirled at the sound of his approach, he was standing close to her, a bulk of black shadow. And for a time neither of them spoke.

Then he asked her half-teasingly, half-jealously, if she were not thinking of Richie Curtis.

"Oh, no," she said in a startled, clear voice. "He was cruel and mean and said things about you. And I grew angry. And then he went away. That was two days ago."

Her tones ended upon an accent of wonder, as if, unconscious still of her power, she was surprised that Richie Curtis had actually gone.

Branham took one stride forward, and with arms tight about her, kissed her lips, her throat. He could feel her trembling, hear her heart beating tumultuously. The scent of her hair, the warm, fragrant scent of her body was in his nostrils.

"Stella!" he murmured in a lover's voice. "Stella!" And helplessly, he repeated the syllables of her name over and over.

He loved her more than he might ever love anyone else, he knew that beyond a doubt. This was no mere summer mood, a thing of sentiment and evanescent prettiness. It was his passion.

Then in that instant of flying reflections, a sweat came out upon his forehead. He felt a ridiculously large drop, like dew, roll down his nose. Would she be able to sit at his table and play the hostess to the large, smart gatherings of powerful people whom he intended to be his associates? Would she hamper him in his struggle for that association?

He must have capital! Where might he get it if not through marriage? There was a woman . . .

He realized now that secretly these thoughts had been in his heart all the while, even as he had been riding here, filling him subconsciously with a bittersweet pang of regret. In that instant he made his decision; he cast down his love by one tearing effort, and in a kind of anguish murmured:

"Stella, I'm going away. You're never going to see me any more. You —young Curtis—I—"

He halted, hearing her fluttering voice asking: "Why? How have I made you angry?" and feeling that the strength was ebbing smoothly from him, that he was surrendering to her soft flesh, to those emotions that he

hated, that he loved and hated, he turned abruptly from her, and stumbled headlong through the woods.

He strove to beat down the disturbance in his mind, the ache, the ache in his heart. Then he said aloud in the darkness like a man in an operation without anæsthetic:

"It will be over soon."

The storm which had threatened all day crumbled at last. The sky was split with dizzy fangs, and thunder rolled boomingly across the mountains as the rain came down, driven before a furious wind. Nature was melodramatic that night, and, as he lashed his horse ahead through the black woods, the young man in the bowler hat found some faint consolation in that attunement to his mood.

Branham, the man of fifty-five, no longer the lover, stirred in his chair. His memories hurt him a little, but looking back, he saw how handsomely he had been compensated for his renunciation. It had not been long after that that he met the woman he married. Her fortune and his brains had rolled the transportation company to high tide of prosperity, had engulfed with it great mines, and steel corporations, and vast analagous holdings.

His wife had risen to an important place in metropolitan society; her dinners were famous; she knew how to dress superbly. Yes, she did him credit, Branham reflected, and if she had a few discreet romances, well, for his part, he had lived his own life, too. She had not wanted children, and there, Branham, after a momentary reluctance, had concurred.

He heard later that Richie Curtis had married Stella, and heard as well that he had come to nothing. He remembered that someone had told him that they had had two children and both had been lost in a dreadful accident. Poor Stella! Poor, charming child!

He swung the album open to the last picture, and a brief memory floated into his mind, as he gazed at the cautious, knowing face of a man of the world, a man of thirty-three, steadily climbing to higher places, unthwarted, unhindered, by any digression from one inviolable purpose.

V

And the thing that he remembered at thirty-three was the time that Frank Parkinson had come in late one evening in the new house Branham had built himself in Madison Avenue, and told him that he had enlisted for the Spanish-American war.

For the last few days the country had been tense and feverish, and the stock-market had grown giddy. Then, like flame, the President's proclamation, calling for volunteers, had scorched the land.

And Parkinson, well over thirty, Parkinson, as shrewd, as successful as Branham, had succumbed to that call and enlisted.

He spoke in nervous, jerky sentences, and Branham, leaning forward, catching the infection, could hear, like an accompaniment, far away across the city streets, a band playing a delirious music. War and the march of men! Branham's pulses were pounding. Yes, he, too, would go. Confused thoughts of patriotism, courage, and a noble death flooded his mind so that he hardly heard what Parkinson was telling him.

Then, suddenly, Parkinson said evenly:

"And you—why don't you come along? Oh, man, how can you help it?"

The monster reared, and Branham, in a flash of vision that saw dreary, monotonous concentration camps, the ironies of a false sacrifice, the cripplings, the pain, the sordid, stale bitterness that was the truth of war, smote it back, and for the last time.

As he mumbled hoarsely some unintelligible words about his wife, his business, his higher duty, he knew he need have no further fear from that source whereby men go down to ruin. He was free for all time from the misadventures of emotion.

It was only a few months later that Parkinson died of a fever in a south-

ern port, and Branham saw that once more he had been wise. He, of course, might have escaped, but at the best it was a gamble in which one stood nothing to win, even if successful.

Now he got up quickly and closed the album, shutting it like a door upon his memories. Poor devils! he was sorry for all of them. Ted Holbrooke, the rebel; John Long, the idealist; Richie Curtis, the lover; Frank Parkinson, the patriot—how sadly they all had blundered! Each man had, perhaps, avoided several such pitfalls, only to be lured to destruction by one of them. And he, Nicholas Branham, had avoided all of them, had surveyed life with a cold, analytical intelligence, had robbed it of its mystery, tricked it of the pain it had to offer, made it do his will.

He stared from the veranda of the tower down the slope of brush and saplings at the brown, country road. In the exultation of his mood, he murmured to himself in an accent of mingled vanity and triumph:

"Cheated! Cheated!"

Yes, he had cheated life; if only the others knew how clever, how supremely clever he had been. He continued to peer down absently upon the highway. And, as he stood there something happened.

VI

A FLIMSY, cheap car put-putted along the roadway. Branham, yawning, watched it idly through his curtains of foliage, as it bounced over the rough road. The next instant there was a sharp, crashing noise, a blending of ominous sounds: breaking glass, a woman's frightened cry, and the ripping of brushwood upon the cliff side. There ensued immediately a profound silence that, in its contrast, made the swift incident appear unreal.

Branham leaned over the railing and stared. The car had plunged out of a rut, lost balance on the crumbling road-bed, and gone down the steep declivity that rose in a sheer face from the rocky trout brook.

Branham hated pain, even in others. His desire was now to command someone, or to hire someone, if only he himself could get away quickly, out of sight and hearing. But Mr. Higgins, the farmer, was in his fields, and the chauffeur had motored the Japanese boy into town to purchase some forgotten essentials.

Branham cursed, then wondered if he would dare to pretend that he had heard nothing until his servants came back. But his imagination did not permit him such a course, and with a sick feeling stealing over him, he descended the path.

The car lay twisted and awry beside a tree-trunk in the midst of chaotic scatterings. At one side lay a man, face downward. Over him stood a slender, elderly woman, tugging at the body with a futile grasp. It was the way she held her head that first reminded Branham, that and a certain characteristic movement of the eyelids. Some of the blood left his face, he was surprised, irritated even, at the realization of how deeply he was moved.

"Stella!" he said.

Her eyes fell upon him with the dim recognition of a person who awakens from sleep. She gave no sign.

"Help me, help me to lift him! Is there a house here? I must get a doctor immediately."

In some vague way Branham felt slighted. Then he told himself that her unaffected indifference at their meeting was a thing entirely natural. Affronted with this accident, she could hardly be expected to act normally.

He bent and examined the man—Richie Curtis, an old, almost gray Richie Curtis, Branham noted in that flash.

His temple carried a big, blue bruise, and one of his wrists was flung back at a grotesque angle. He was unconscious, but he breathed.

Branham, loathing this close association with pain, lifted him laboriously, with his hands clutching the armpits. The woman, her breath coming jerkily, staggered beneath the weight of his ankles.

That journey to the farmer's house seemed to Branham like a memory from delirium. Unaccustomed to the effort, and with muscles grown soft and fat, he stumbled backwards up the hillside. Fantastic thoughts crowded into his brain. He had a wild instant in which he wondered if he might not buy God to do this service for him . . .

They laid Richie Curtis down at last upon Mr. Higgins' bed, and a child ran to tell the farmer. He appeared, ruddy and bewildered, almost immediately, and Branham dispatched him for the doctor who lived, luckily, not far away. In the interim before the latter's arrival, he busied himself with trivial concerns. He found himself carrying a pillow from the bedroom to the kitchen and then back again. He was conscious of a dazed sensation, as if a protective abstraction had settled upon him.

The doctor's pronouncement was indefinite. A bone or two broken was the superficial verdict, but the continued coma might mean some internal hemorrhage. The patient must be watched constantly through the night, and in the morning, if no change occurred, be driven to the nearest hospital for a specialist's examination.

After he had gone, Branham still lingered in the low-ceilinged, musty room. Out in the kitchen the farmer and his wife were exchanging stupid monosyllables upon the event. In a chair by the fireside, peering with an unrelaxed attention at the body of the sick man, sat the woman whom Branham had once loved.

He surveyed her there with a critical vision. He observed the worn blue travelling-dress, bespeaking, if not poverty, at least limited means, the tired grave face, ageing far too early, and the eyes intense still, and still mysterious. She was no longer a desirable woman, but Branham, gazing at those features, re-created the picture of his ideal, and saw, too, something of what his life might have been like had he married her. His glance passed on to the lined, rather weak face of the man on the bed. Then Branham said in a low voice:

"Stella, it's queer the way we've met again . . . like this . . . isn't it?"

She turned with a startled air as if she had been unconscious of his presence.

"Yes," she murmured vaguely, and her attention returned to her husband.

"You know I live here, I have a place next door," Branham continued in a voice somewhat louder.

"Have you? I—yes—*Oh, do you think he will get better?*"

Perfunctory syllables had been followed by an exclamation, directed not to Branham, directed not to anyone, in a voice of love and fear.

Then suddenly Branham saw the truth. She was not interested in where or how he existed, or to what pitch he had come. Yet over this shabby, rather fatuous man, who had not even been able to secure for her any of the good things of life, she hovered with an anxiety that was torture.

Branham got up stiffly. His heart seemed to hurt him. He went out of that room, out of that house, and over the crest of the hill to his own. Clouds, banking in the west, veiled a slow, dull sunset. Branham stepped abstractedly into his splendid living-room with the wide hearth, the glowing pictures, the old books. Already they were obscured by the falling twilight.

He felt curiously lonely, and the walls mocked him. There was no friendly voice, no hand to touch, no smile for greeting. God! was he becoming a sentimentalist as cheap as a mountebank in a vaudeville performance?

He whirled about as if confronting some animate force, and thinking still of the silent man on the bed, of the woman bending over him, Branham said suddenly aloud to these walls:

"Who should do as much for me?"

The chauffeur and the Japanese boy had not returned, and Branham, knowing it, yet called out their names, that he might hear the sound of his own

voice. In imagination he could visualize the Jap, inscrutable, smiling, polite, bowing in the doorway, and waiting to hear what he would care to eat or drink. To eat or drink! Was that all he could command?

A ridiculous song, a jingle about "what money can't buy" danced into his mind. Ridiculous—the creed of fools and silly women! There were streets in New York where he, Branham, was recognized by every twentieth man, where his salutation in return conferred a subtle favour. There were clubs and associations that were proud to place him at the speakers' table on banquet nights. And yet—and yet—he was lonely.

It occurred to him that he was growing old. And he halted to ponder what he had gotten out of life after all. Had he gained anything save material success, and a vain sense of petty victories? Had he ever really tasted the sweetness of one, full, satisfying impulse?

In that instant, Branham, old and lonely, saw what must have been in the heart of Ted Holbrooke when he led his disastrous rebellion, in the heart of John Long in his quiet workshop, in the heart of Parkinson as he lay dying like a rat of a vile fever, in the heart of the man and the woman in the house, over there, next door.

To put aside a growing sense of horror, he walked over quickly and touched the electric switch. It failed to operate. Light, he must have light! He struck a match and held it with shaky fingers to a candle above the hearth. Near by, on the wall, a slim, tall mirror caught the reflection of the spade of flame, and sent back the man's likeness, a thing of sinister gleams and shadows.

And staring at that, the last picture of all, with the selfish eyes, the selfish mouth, the selfish miserable face, Branham put up his hand in a gesture desperate and forlorn. From his lips came a broken mutter of sound:

"Cheated! Cheated!"

BUT STILL

By Muna Lee

YOUR strength is like a stalwart tree
I throw my arms around,
And I am stronger for the touch
Of life so sound.

But still sometimes I slip away,
And—where you cannot see,
I weep for the tremulous, wistful lad
You used to be.

NEVER has a somewhat different significance from *never again*.

LULLABY FEAR

By Mary Carolyn Davies

THREE mothers rocked their babes to sleep—
"Sleep!" they sang; and "My little one, sleep!"

"Sleep, sleep," sang one of the three;
And did not know he would grow to be
The dark-browed thief on the left-hand tree.

"Sleep, sleep," sang one of the three;
And did not know he would grow to be
The bearded thief on the right-hand tree.

"Sleep, sleep," sang one of the three;
And did not know he would grow to be
The Christ, the Christ, on the gallows tree.

And over the world to-night are three
Mothers whose three babes sleep at their knee.
Two will steal and one will feel
The wound in his side not heaven can heal!

God grant that it be not you nor I
As we croon to-night a lullaby,
Who clutch and kiss and rock on our knee
Thieves or a Christ for the gallows tree!

THE prejudices of man come from the mind and are easy to overcome; the prejudices of woman come from the heart, and no one has ever succeeded in overcoming them.

THREE men proposed to Myrtle. She was good to two of them.

MISS MELBY'S CHANGE OF HEART

By John Hunter Sedgwick

I

MISS DRUSILLA MELBY was very neat and very clean, and though in the eye of the law she was a spinster, could by no means be described as an old maid, at least so far as the stage directions for that part require. She was of an agreeable age, she was pleasant to look at, and she took a candid satisfaction in being well dressed, a thing which she could well afford, even in this day of swollen prices. Her father, George John Melby, had been obese and wealthy; her mother, born a Clegg, of the Cleggville mill family, had been plump and wealthy; her aunts and uncles had been obligingly wealthy and a very fair amount of all this wealth had filtered through to Miss Melby, like shot through a tower. To a large degree, she did what she pleased and did it very efficiently; not only were her gowns and hats excellent, but she had a good, if somewhat rigid, taste in stockings and scarves, a sympathetic eye for slippers, and was really a *virtuoso* in parasols, of which she had a large and valuable collection in her house at Germantown.

She had read not a few books, heard not a little music, and had really done a great deal of work in behalf of various respectable causes, sitting on committees, making motions and even reading reports. She knew good eating, never since she was a school-girl having been deceived by those dainty bills of fare with which so many upright women attempt to conjure away the looming presence of the human stomach. She had an almost masculine taste in easy chairs and liked a large tea-cup.

To her own certain knowledge she had never made a mistake in her life and had not much patience with those that had, though she was not an ill-natured woman, and prided herself on taking a broad view of people and things. She plumed herself on her independence and considered that the question of good or ill conduct was simply one of turning to the right or left. She held very sensibly that it was just as easy to turn to the right as to the left; she found it so and saw no reason why others should not do the same. Seemly conduct was as natural as having plenty of coals in winter and plenty of ice in summer; unseemly conduct was quite unnecessary and clearly unnatural, and what was unnatural could not be.

Filled with a ferocity not unknown in the annals of the human mind, she mistook it for high principles, but never spoke about it to herself or others. She believed that self-indulgence consisted in the lawless acts of the disreputable, and was sure that comfort was the eldest child of the virtues. One was comfortable as one brushed one's teeth and took hot baths; Venus rose from the sea, it is true, but it would have been nicer had she used a flesh-brush and had the towels warmed, though Venus, of course, was simply a figure that one saw in marble at the Louvre or in the Vatican collection.

Miss Melby had always resented inwardly the calmness of Venus's face; it took far more for granted than any intelligent American woman was going to admit. Venus, thought Miss Melby, ought to be put in her place, along with the men that looked at her and grew

wistfully grave. But with such unprofitable and slightly annoying thoughts, she had little traffic and less concern, for she knew that she was right, which is an exceedingly satisfactory state of mind.

It was Miss Melby's habit, when the summer came, to leave the heats of Pennsylvania and her esteemed Germantown and to betake herself to the crisper delights of New England, where in a township in the hills of Maine she stayed until autumn flamed in the trees. Here at a good hotel she met a number of friends and had her walks and her bridge. It was a firm step for her to take, as she left her cook and other servants at home, bringing with her only her maid and her chauffeur, a lethargic and fairly honest man that had been in her father's service as coachman. At her hotel, of course, the food was poor and the cooking unimaginative, but then there was the air, and one must sacrifice one's self, especially as one appreciated decent living afterwards.

So here we find her installed in her compact suite of rooms; her boxes neatly ranged against the walls, flowers on the table, her bridge-box and counters, her photographs and a full supply of periodical literature, that is, of the better kind, where the grammar is almost always correct and passion and facts are swaddled by the loving hands of the correctest writers. The windows gave on a noble view; there swept before the eye refreshed a stretch of wood and hill and noble sky in which floated the great, good-natured clouds of summer. Up from the courts the voices of tennis players floated; from nearby fields came the caw of wise crows, while the sweet, clean air swept in and out in unexhausted strength. Sniffing the savour of the earth, Miss Melby thanked her good God for having made her so good.

II

Sunset and dinner were approaching, so Miss Melby called her maid and thought that she would wear the black and green spotted muslin, a simple and becoming costume in which she looked as comely as any comfortable woman ought to look.

"Jennie," said she, "did you get the needles for the Victrola?"

"Yes, Miss Melby," said her maid. "I filled the cups and the rest's in the envelope that I put on your writing-pad."

"Thank you," said Miss Melby. "No, I'll wear the green stockings to-night and the suède slippers—the ones with the cut-steel buckles."

Miss Melby liked cheerful music and though she feared to think that the phonograph was on a level with the cinematograph, which the unguarded called the movies, she yet had fallen a victim to its charms and had one that she took away with her. From its wooden bowels she liked to hear come forth the syncopated cheer of fox-trots and the more exalting strains of national airs and symphony orchestras. Vocal music she avoided; she had told the young man at the shop that she found it unpleasantly personal in one's room and he had said that she was quite right.

When she went down to dinner, she found her three friends seated at the table.

There was Charnwood, an English journalist who was seeing New England for the first time and enjoying it as only an intelligent Englishman can enjoy a countryside, and there were Admiral Henderson and his wife. The Admiral was a quiet, hard-bitten man who had seen much service and many lands and in a modest, matter-of-fact way understood more about the romance of life than most of the gentlemen that write about it. He and the Englishman had become firm friends, having discovered many acquaintances in common from Macao to Porto Ferrajo, but were discreet in their manner of talking about them. Mrs. Henderson was a large woman of a great deal of executive ability; born of a Kentucky family and keen on the touch of honour, she yet practised and enjoyed the art of conversation, an art in which she excelled to

the admiration of many that had been privileged to test its full charm.

Charnwood and the Admiral rose and bowed to Miss Melby as she sank into her chair with a smile.

"You're late, you know," said Charnwood. "Your soup's impatient for you, Miss Melby."

"Never mind," said she. "I know I'm late, but I'm not often so."

She liked Charnwood; he had a very pleasant manner and was tall and tanned, having added yet another coat to his sunburn since he had taken to exploring the Maine hills. Charnwood always listened very quietly to Miss Melby when she stated her views; she had many and stated them with a finality that pleased Charnwood very much.

She had been gratified by this attitude and overlooked the fact that inside of twenty-four hours he always gave her to understand in his quiet, smiling way that she had been quite wrong, but that that made little or no difference. There were times when, as she admitted, she did not quite understand him, though she never said so, which was unnecessary, as he was quite conscious of the fact.

"No, thanks," said Charnwood to the waitress as she passed him what is known at American summer hotels as the fish. "I hope the joint will be generous. I'm tremendously sharp set. It's your wonderful New England air, I fancy—and my large appetite. I say," said he in a whisper to Mrs. Henderson, "what's the matter with the waitress—Lucy, ain't she?—she looks awfully down."

Mrs. Henderson was the wife of an admiral and the daughter of a chief magistrate, so she put her glasses on her nose and gazed at Lucy.

"She?" she asked. "I'm sure I don't know. I think she looks very sullen—those dark girls often are."

The waitress was a pretty girl with dark hair and eyes and a clear complexion, but to-night she had black pouches under her eyes and looked, not sullen, but hopeless and indifferent.

"Fish?" said she to Mrs. Henderson.

That lady regarded her for a moment with disapproval and then helped herself generously to what the less adventurous Charnwood had declined.

"Got a digestion like a Tchuntchu pony," said he to himself. "Good old Henderson."

"Lucy," said Mrs. Henderson, "when you are addressing guests, you will adopt a more respectful tone."

"Yes, yes, my dear," said the Admiral. "Charnwood's going to show us that new lead to-night—the one he picked up in Paris," added the Admiral, with the painstaking detail of the suffering.

The girl looked at him and Charnwood and saw two friends; she flushed slightly and glanced at Miss Melby. That lady looked at her as one who has never made any mistakes looks at one that has possibilities in the unorthodox direction and then dismissed the subject from her mind. The gallant Charnwood then told two distinctly amusing stories and inwardly and sincerely hoped that there would be no flaying alive while he was about; he stood a fair chance of seeing the Admiral and himself succeed in their benevolent intentions of shielding a human being, when there came a sea-turn with the dessert.

At that moment there floated to their table in a waft of orris and with a tinkling of jewels and a soft crunching of silk Mrs. Stewart Gormley, one of Mrs. Henderson's dearest and most accomplished friends. Mrs. Gormley had made a good meal; her lower jowl was pink and her eyes swam in a liquid content.

"Good evening, all," said Mrs. Gormley, standing by Miss Melby's chair, while she held her fan and bag in her white, padded hands. "I hope you had as good a dinner as we did. We've a star waitress. But I'm afraid she's not as attractive as yours," and Mrs. Gormley smiled so that Charnwood and the Admiral wanted to throw her out.

"No," said Admiral Henderson, "we depend on Lucy only for food," and Charnwood grinned at Mrs. Gormley in a way that assured her that she had

shown once more her essential knowledge of the world.

"Ah, Mrs. Gormley," said Charnwood, "there are so many attractive women in your country that—"

"One more or less doesn't count, Mr. Charnwood?" She called him "Chanwoord," the only thing that ruffled him in ten months' sojourn in the States. She was not without perception, and had seen at once that so far as he and Henderson were concerned their thumbs would not be turned down at Lucy, the waitress, so she turned to Miss Melby and said:

"Well, anyhow, you're going to lose her."

"Why, what's the—" began the Admiral innocently, but Mrs. Gormley smiled the smile that had been patented long before the Queen of Sheba's day, and said to Miss Melby that perhaps she'd see her in the card-room after dinner.

Miss Melby had been listening attentively and said almost too readily that she would be in the card-room after she had had her coffee, and Mrs. Gormley smiled and went resplendently away.

III

It was a stern and rather cross Miss Melby that left the card-room that night, a Miss Melby that felt singularly irritated at the weakness and the folly of Lucy the waitress, and still more singularly irritated that the weak and foolish one was so good-looking. She must be, though Miss Melby could never see much beauty in dark women, but Charnwood had said that Lucy reminded him of the women in Corsica, a remark which he had a perfect right to make, even if her friends in Philadelphia did not say such things in a way that implied that beauty was quite as well accepted a fact as sewing circles and settlement work. And waitresses should not be pretty, they should be useful, even if men that had seen all sorts of queer people and queer places chose to talk about their looks. Indeed, as Miss Melby meditated upon Charnwood's frank and careless way in speaking of Lucy's looks, she flushed a little.

She had had a long session with Mrs. Gormley and Mrs. Admiral Henderson in which the business in hand had been exhaustively treated by those two ladies. The subject, the alleged facts and the conclusions may all be imagined; all three had expressed their indignation and suppressed their delight in the subject; all three went up to bed inexpugnable and calmly content with themselves, but Miss Melby had been a little the less easy of the three, as to her, on account of her charity work, had been deputed the task of demanding on the morrow that Lucy be condignly dismissed, though Miss Melby felt that justice was to be done, just why, she did not know, but she did know that sinners must be punished. Much helped and comforted by this sound reflection and a little eager with the zest of the chase, she went to her room and prepared for the night.

On the table by Miss Melby's bed were a jug of ice-water, a volume of Marcus Aurelius and of Ralph Waldo Emerson, two hard biscuits, a candle and a radium-faced watch. She had Jennie put a cloth over the Victrola and take her white shoes to be blancoed in the morning, and locked herself in, bidding her maid good night with unemotional good will. She stood, a comely figure, staring hard at the candle's flame and then murmuring, "Ah-h, the nasty thing," blew it out and got into bed.

Miss Melby always slept well and secretly disapproved of those eccentric people who did not, so that it cannot surprise to know that she was soon fast asleep in the cool, sweet-smelling room that was quite dark save where a bar of moonlight tilted in through the window. Miss Melby's quiet form showed dimly in the corner of the room and there was no sound save her gentle breathing and the soft ticking of her Swiss clock.

The curtain gently lifted in and out of the casement, now and then the quiet rustle of leaves whispered in the air, the moon rose higher and far off in a

glen a whip-poor-will's nervous call sounded every now and then as the wind freshened or fell away, when Miss Melby awoke, not with a start, but as one gently called.

She lay calmly like a child, without the slightest movement, save that her eyelids stirred. She never woke up at night and could hardly treat seriously this apparent exception to a sound and complacent habitude. But she was awake, for there were the radium hands of her watch that told her it was two o'clock, and this was, of course, long before her hour for waking. And the moonlight was streaming into the room past her bed and full upon the covered Victrola from which came the velvet tones of a great tenor as he sang "Che Gelida Manina," and the music rose and fell all over the room until Miss Melby sat up and came very near holding out her arms.

She was a woman of carefully arranged ideas and her elbows had almost left her sides when she remembered with an indignant flush that her Victrola had no discs whatever of vocal music; there was therefore no possibility that the music came from any place in her, Miss Melby's, room, although it was so coming.

The song continued and here was she, Drusilla Melby, made a personal confidant, if not spectator, of the loves of Mimi Pinson and Rodolphe, who, she remembered with some indignation, was nothing but a minor poet after all.

She was flushed still, but could not keep her indignation at its full pitch; ratiocination and the higher reaches of Italian opera seem to have something incompatible between them, and now she listened and now she almost swooned, reprobated and eagerly caught every touch of the rich chords that fell about her like warm rain. She rested one hand on the bed, the other pressed against her bosom and her eyes stared at the instrument from which there came these sounds of unwonted harmonies.

Then, for a moment's space, the music gave over; though only for a second, it was long enough for Miss Melby to remember that she was glad it had stopped and for her quickly to reflect that though she had often heard the opera, none of it had ever struck her quite like this before.

She would perhaps have gained much from these reflections had not the Victrola begun again, and this time there rolled from it the absorbing *cantabile* of that sombre and stately villain, Scarpia. Out rolled the great baritone notes, manlier than the tenor's, more commanding and asking dignity and fear for the devil.

Furiously angry, held in spite of herself, struggling against a strength that it made her but angrier to think was greater than her own, she rose from her bed and stood up threateningly, as though to drive out the intruder.

"How dare—" she had begun, when Scarpia gave a deep laugh, and suddenly she heard what she thought was a familiar and relieving sound; surely there was rattling on her grateful ears the sounds of a well-known fox-trot.

Her heart became soft in gratitude as when in a strange place one greets a somewhat dull but safe acquaintance. There was the liveliness; there struck the rattling snare-drum and nasally wailed the comic tones of the saxophone; with neat precision, the bones clattered and the cymbals clanged, while the flute tied all together with its ribbon note.

She started, put one foot forward and then began to dance with decorous and enjoying precision, but not five seconds had she danced than she was Lalage, inviting, charming, quiet and unashamed, and the music, the music was the music of the nether regions that scorched and stifled her with a magic that she asked again. No longer were grinning negroes in clean, white clothes playing their harmless syncopations; what she heard came from Phœnicia and Palermo and the Mountains of the Moon; her partner was a Norman page and Ashtoreth looked on, smiling with her heavy eyes.

"Thank you," said Miss Melby, as she sank on the edge of the bed and then burst into tears, tears that ran down

her face while she sobbed and panted. There was no music now, the scent of perfume and heavy roses was not in the room, she was alone, yet she had danced and now she was weeping.

Presently she ceased weeping, and putting back the hair that had become disarranged, she sat with her hands between her knees and her head slightly inclined as she gazed unseeingly into the dark space, for now the moon had sunk away. Her face was perfectly still and on her smooth cheek still hung a belated tear; she was motionless, almost lifeless, save that her nostrils quivered faintly now and again.

But while she sat there quietly in the darkness there came the haunting song of the Japanese Butterfly that loved and bade farewell, that had beaten her wings against selfishness, but enshrined a deathless love. Her heart-breaking cry filled the room as she asked that her man return and as she renounced him; her wild and helpless despair, her choking desire for him she worshipped, the love with which her soul must ever fondle and caress him, her innocent passion, came and appealed to this woman of the Occident that had never made a mistake. The Butterfly sang her sweet and poignant threnody from the Orient, but it came on the music of the Occident that brought her into every land and into Miss Melby's heart, hitherto but swept and garnished.

"My dear, don't cry," she began, and put out her hand, but Butterfly sang on, and presently with a shrill wail bade good-bye in humble defiance of a world that was too dull and gross to know the dearest treasure that it could possess.

"Butterfly, Butterfly!" cried Miss Melby, half rising from her seat. "You mustn't, you know. Oh, dear, if I could only do something!"

But there was no sound, save the tiny whirr of the Swiss clock. No, Butterfly was not there, but Miss Melby was, and, seeing that it was three o'clock, she knew that she must go back to bed and sleep, which presently she did, but not before she had gone on her knees and had held certain communings.

IV

The morning, when it broke, was brighter and fairer than ever, but Jennie had to shake her mistress softly by the shoulder before Miss Melby awoke. There were dark half-circles under her eyes and she was pale, but she said briskly to her maid:

"Good morning, Jennie. Just look at the Victrola, will you? I think the covering fell off in the night."

"No'm," said Jennie, looking back from the instrument to which she had gone. "It's there, all right."

"Very well," said Miss Melby. "Start my bath, please, and go and tell Mrs. Henderson I'll be down in half an hour."

At the breakfast hour, Mrs. Admiral Henderson was pacing the corridor; a smell of tooth-powder came from her, and her corsets creaked slightly as with the step of a high-minded pantheress she walked slowly up and down. Charnwood had seen her in the distance, but that kind man remembered that there was an execution set for that morning, and he walked down a passageway whistling loudly and out of tune. Besides, Charnwood did not much like breakfasting with Mrs. Admiral Henderson; he found her too stern and too aristocratic for such an early hour, and she ate rather more than was good for her, at least it seemed so to Charnwood, though it is only fair to Mrs. Henderson to say that he but judged from surface indications.

"Good morning, my dear," said Mrs. Henderson. "Down on the minute, as usual," as Miss Melby approached, walking steadily toward her.

"Don't you feel well?" asked Mrs. Henderson solicitously as she noted her friend's silence and her tired eyes.

"Perfectly well, thank you," said Miss Melby. "Are you coming in to breakfast, Mrs. Henderson?"

"Wait a minute," said Mrs. Henderson. "Are you going to—" and as she said this she made a movement of her head in the direction of the hotel office.

"I'm going in to breakfast," said Miss Melby, looking her in the eye. "Aren't you?"

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Henderson hastily, and they went in together.

The Admiral was already there and had finished his first cup of black coffee; Charnwood came in presently, with his clean-shaven face and battered tweeds, which always bothered the resplendent husband of the resplendent Mrs. Gormley, and breakfast was in full swing.

In a few minutes it was evident that Mrs. Henderson could contain herself no longer; in a firm and not very soft tone she said to Miss Melby:

"When are you going to speak at the office about Lucy?"

"I am not going to speak at the office about Lucy," said Miss Melby. "I am not going to persecute that woman. She—she is a good woman, Mrs. Henderson. She is unhappy and"—here Miss Melby's bosom rose and fell—"I am very sorry for the poor thing. And you shan't say anything about her yourself!"

For a moment there was utter silence. Charnwood grinned like a boy at a fight and the Admiral looked up from his newspaper with a very keen look on his brown face. Mrs. Henderson was not the daughter of a Chief Justice for nothing; with a staggered, but majestic, dignity, she said to Miss Melby:

"The idea! I, Miss Melby, have never heard such language!"

"No," said that lady. "No, Mrs. Henderson, there are many things that you have not heard. Mr. Charnwood, please pass me the toast!"

PERSONAL NOTE

By William Drayham

I HAD not seen her for many months. There came a photograph. It was a different girl—pretty, charming, challenging, but not the same. I faced the hard job of falling in love with her all over again.

BEFORE marriage a woman sees in other men only the defects her lover has avoided; after marriage she sees in other men only the virtues her husband has discarded.

A MAN always admires a woman who refuses to be kissed, but he seldom thinks of her for more than a day or two afterward.

IMAGINE a woman trusting a husband who had fallen in love with her at first sight!

YET I AM MOVED PROFOUNDLY

By James Grayson

I HAVE worked and I have played. I have failed and I have succeeded. Step by step I have climbed the ladder. But I am restless. I cannot get enough pleasure. I try new wines, new tobaccos, and new actresses. I run to the exotic. I peer into the shadows of strange cities. I search the faces of women on the streets. I crave the thrill of new conquests—amatory or military, it matters little to me. I love to live—love to live so well, indeed, that I am fascinated by life's supreme adventure—death. Nothing urges me to goodness but the penal statutes and the stupidity of evil. The fear of God is not in me. I do not know whether there is a God or not. I am a sleek, well-fed, well-dressed American citizen. Yet I am moved profoundly by the tears of my gray-haired mother, who kissed me good-bye this summer, sorrowing because I have not given my heart to God.

INVOCATION

By Edith Chapman

WHICH shall I remember and which shall I forget?
Gray skies of evening; a little cup of pain
Held to my lips, where I feel it burning yet;
Eyes gray as evening, beneath a sheet of rain.

Which shall I remember and which shall I forget?
Dear arms that held me, or soul that said me no?
Shall I remember and struggle for you yet?
Shall I forget, pick up my life and go?

POOR WINNIE! POOR TOWNY!

By Paul Brooks

I

I WAS dining alone and rather frugally at my hotel. My digestive apparatus had been shaken up by a three-day storm at sea, and I was in a predicament, for the sight of the overabundance of food that was being heaped up on the next table was a torture to my squeamish insides. If I kept my eyes open, I couldn't help turning vaguely sick at the array of dishes so near at hand; if, however, I took refuge from the unholy profusion by closing my eyes, I found myself straightway reeling.

Although I had had New York's firm pavements under my feet for a good six hours now, I could still feel the pitch of the waves. There was nothing for it, I decided at last, but to brace myself and keep my gaze averted. I did my best to fix my attention on a far-away cornice, but I was as powerless to prevent my glance from dropping to the level of the eagerly chewing mouths near by as a man with a toothache is incapable of keeping his tongue out of the cavity.

I really can't say what would have resulted if I hadn't recognized one of the voracious young mouths at the next table; I think that act of remembrance saved me, by diverting my attention from my own distressing condition. I had always been interested in the Redmond boy; I focussed my thoughts on him now with an instinctive realization that here was my salvation.

As I took in his childish, curly-headed companion, I wondered if here, indeed, wasn't *his* damnation. It's a dangerous sign when a chap, eighteen years old and absolutely dependent for his sustenance on a poverty-stricken mother, takes to entertaining a yellow-pated girl at a smart hotel. That the boy was playing the host on a large scale was obvious. "Poor Charlotte Redmond!" I reflected uneasily as I noticed the youth cocking a bleary eye at the label on the champagne bottle that a waiter was presenting for his verdict. This wasn't the children's first quart, either!

The girl's identity puzzled me. I seemed, somehow, to remember her too. She was an adorable, fluffy little creature. I strove hard to place her and failed. "I see her with bare legs!" I ruminated; that was as far as I got. Whether I'd beheld her last as a child with socks or as a girl in a chorus I couldn't make out.

I had soon decided that the latter possibility was the more plausible. Though she was consuming her Coupe Jacques with the relish of an infant, she was also quaffing her champagne like an old hand. She chattered at a headlong rate; she tossed ever and again at her companion a glance that mingled infantile adoration and the wisest imaginable message of seasoned coquetry.

What in the world was there between these babies? I'd early perceived that there was *everything* between them. Spurred on by their blissful intoxication, they were betraying themselves with the greatest impudence. I couldn't help chuckling at the hilarious, ribald honesty of the youngsters. On one occasion, Redmond, clutching at the waiter's sleeve, whispered a confession that convulsed the man and caused the girl a vivid blush.

They had been well along in their

extravagant banquet when I arrived. Though I hadn't ordered a great deal, I had weighed every mouthful with such care that my dinner dragged along unconsciously. My shameless neighbours had eaten and drunk with amazing speed, but they left the room only a few moments ahead of me. For one thing, the girl had gobbled up three desserts; moreover, they'd lingered on even after that for another pint of champagne and dozens of tiny assorted cakes.

When they finally got up, they formed a side-splitting tableau. They grasped for each other and stood a moment in wambling uncertainty; I, for one, knew just how the room must be spinning. Then they giggled delightedly, while the boy patted the girl's head by way of indulgent encouragement. She cast one homesick glance at their table, discovered three little florid cakes that had been overlooked and, after capturing them, proceeded to stuff the two most succulent ones into her own mouth and the third into young Redmond's. They burst into peals of bibulous mirth at that and rushed precipitately out of the room.

"Poor Charlotte!" I opined once more under my breath.

My eyes had rested on the bills—two of them yellow-backs—that the boy had flung down carelessly on the table. He hadn't bothered to wait for his change. Probably the waiter's fee would have bought Mrs. Redmond a hat much more expensive than she'd ever achieved in the past.

II

THE disgraceful dinner haunted me throughout the night and kept me wakeful. More than once I cursed the cub for robbing me of the rest I'd so banked on, so looked forward to, for a week. When, next morning, I learned the truth of the whole business from young Redmond himself, I was inordinately relieved.

He had come blundering into my sitting-room with a great show of affection and with many "Welcome homes" accompanied by resounding slaps on the back. It had been manifestly his purpose to convince me that we were no longer in the relation of small boy and elderly adviser. It was to be man to man now—with a vengeance. He was too shy at first, however, to carry the thing off properly.

The jovial greetings were hardly over when he brought out with all the old-time sheepishness:

"I—I need your help; I'm in a mess—"

He hesitated; then, recovering himself, he captured again his new pose of perfect man-of-the-world equality. "I've gone and done it, old man."

"Done *what?*" I let him see I was at a loss.

I suppose my smile was ironic, perhaps even superior. At any rate, he pouted a bit, squared his shoulders and announced:

"I'm married. Winnie Browning, you know—"

"Good God!" I couldn't conceal my mirth now. "That infant at the breast!"

He didn't like my attitude—that was obvious.

"She's sixteen—and mature for her age," he mumbled.

"Winnie Browning!" I still was gasping. "Why, it seems only yesterday that her mother invited me in to see Winnie in the bathtub."

The boy came a step nearer to me, grasped my sleeve and gazed with intensity into my eyes. He meant me to give over my offensive jollying, to acknowledge perforce that he was a personage to be reckoned with. So he remarked, cryptically and in all dignity:

"Well, that's *my* privilege now—"

His courage failed him at this absurd juncture and he blushed hotly.

It struck me at once as pathetic. I became serious on the instant. I patted his shoulder and remarked:

"I beg your pardon, Towny, for not seeing the dignity of your position straight off. What do you want of me?"

He wanted a great deal. Fifteen minutes later I had the entire tale in my possession. The boy had soon lost his

shyness; he was thorough—unduly so!—in recounting all the events of the harum-scarum elopement. He laid the colours on thick; I think he was gloating throughout—giving a poor starved celibate a peep into the region of rosy romance, as it were.

He may have failed to summon a mantling blush to my cheeks; to this day I'm not quite at rest on that point. Certain it is that I was impressed by the scamp's prowess—he must have sensed my tacit humility. He'd been incoherent and rather sketchy so far as the main issue went. I really couldn't blame him for dismissing in a few words the prosaic business of soliciting help. After all, it required only a hint now and again to show me what my part of the adventure was destined to be. I therefore let the hymeneal chant flow on and usurp nine-tenths of our time; I gave my most deferential attention to the resounding Epithalamium.

While we shook hands at parting, I assured him of my understanding and sympathy.

"I'll do everything I can, Towny," I averred. "I think you've nothing to fear from your mother. The Brownings won't be such an easy matter; they won't relish the theft of their only child. But we'll bring them around eventually." I wound up on a sententious note. "Only make your little Winnie happy and they'll soon see the justice of your kidnapping."

The boy's response to my exhortation may well be imagined; it carried him halfway to the lift.

III

My suspicions as to the welcome my office of go-between would receive had been correct. Poor Charlotte gave in unconditionally. The Brownings refused to countenance the marriage in any but an extravagant financial way. The methods of the princely Brett Browning had always robbed me of breath. I'd prepared myself for a shock; but I fear I gasped outright when the injured father named the allowance he was willing to put in Winnie's pocket. It would amount in a year to something more than the sum of my worldly possessions. I thought the pile excessive; but I didn't dare hint of my fears. Brett has the art of cowing everyone in the wide world but his tiny daughter. She's been a match for him from the cradle.

"I'll hire a house for her myself," Browning informed me. "My wife and I'll see to installing servants. Winnie's got to live her own life now at a good distance from her mother. Let her hang herself or redeem herself unaided—that's the point."

In a month's time, Winnie and Towny were lording it over a baronial place up the Hudson. I remember shaking my head disapprovingly when I read that they'd taken the Landers estate. Somehow this announcement brought home to me the pathos of the youngsters' lot as nothing else had yet done. Why saddle them with such prodigious cares at the period of their sweetest unreliability? Of course, they were a shameless pair; it wouldn't bother them a bit to have hordes of servants peering and prying and poking about. They were neither modest nor bashful. Still, the actual running of the establishment must needs distract them, terribly often, from each other. It was a stroke of masterful irony on the part of Brett Browning; it therefore angered me. He ought, by all the rules of decency and fitness, to have let the children alone.

Naturally, Towny wanted me to visit him. He'd already gained somewhat the upper hand of me; I perforce submitted to the dates he set and the arrangements he made. My sojourn at "Bellevue" was certainly interesting. I can't recall when, as an honoured guest, I've been allowed more leisure for philosophic contemplation of my hosts. The children were both vociferous and cordial; but they *did* rather neglect me.

It was evident from the first that Towny had got me there simply in order to parade his wife and his luxuries and himself before my eyes. I'm sure that

in the past, I'd never given the boy the slightest reason for harbouring a grudge; I've gone over my entire relation with him and satisfied myself of my perfect innocence on that score. His attitude, however, throughout my stay, was jauntily, almost maliciously superior. Probably he wasn't "getting back at me"; I suppose he was just so damned proud of his greatness that he couldn't help boasting all day and all night. Oh, I made allowances many times; still, it does ruffle a man's good humour to be treated like an old-maid aunt from the country.

Winnie was an out-and-out darling; she paraded nothing before me but her love for Towny. And she really didn't parade *that;* she couldn't, however, keep it out of her face or her actions. By the first evening of my visit I'd got to the point of adoring her. She hadn't changed much since the day, three years before, when I had last seen her as plain little Winnie Browning; I remembered her quite vividly now—she'd been playing croquet, her plump legs *were* bare, the short socks untidily rumpled. It pained me not a little at present to look on while Towny plied her with cigarettes and high-balls. I took occasion to drop a well-timed remonstrance when Towny strolled into my room just before dinner.

"I realize you're your own boss now, Towny—every gesture you make shouts that fact," I remarked. "You'll still accept a suggestion or two about Winnie, though—eh?"

Towny's shrug wasn't exactly polite.

"What's your complaint, old man?" he nevertheless conceded.

"Well, now the honeymoon's over, I'd put her back on a milk diet, if I were you. The fact that she's a wife doesn't make her a woman. Whisky's *not* the thing for a girl of sixteen." I let him have a stern scowl to reinforce my words.

He froze up at once.

"Don't you worry about my methods," he told me coolly. "I know what's good for my wife. I can look out for her—without anybody's advice. It's damned nice of you, trying to give me the guiding hand and all that. But I'd rather go my own gait—without interference." This from the boy who had often sat in humility at my feet and drunk in every word of my sage discourse!

"Very well, Towny." I'm afraid I was too much amazed to give my retort great force. "Your particular gait won't bring the Brownings around very soon. Don't forget that."

"Oh!" He was quite at ease on that score. "Much I care for the Brownings! They can go to the devil, so far as Winnie and I are concerned. *We* don't want them."

He swung out of the room without paying the slightest heed to my parting shot. "Don't let Brett hear you talk like that!" I'd shouted in an unavailing fury. "You might have to get out and *work* for your Winnie, my boy! You might—"

At that the door slammed to behind him.

I waited in the drawing-room a good half-hour before Winnie and Towny put in an appearance. The moment I caught sight of them racing arm-in-arm down the great staircase I saw what was up. The crazy-headed boy had evidently determined to teach me a lesson, to prove to me the folly of interfering. He must have had a wonderful array of drinks sent up; he must have coaxed poor Winnie into a downright tippling match—just to show the old mossback a thing or two.

"Say 'Truly rural' for the gentleman, Win," commanded Towny directly they'd joined me.

His bad joke missed the mark. I stood before him, no doubt looking awkward enough in all conscience; even so, I think my disgust lent me *some* dignity.

Winnie, who had started out in a ripple of babyish mirth, broke off abruptly. For a long moment she and I looked at each other. Perhaps she'd only got to the lachrymal stage of her infantile debauch; on the other hand, perhaps my genuine pity had the authentic touch necessary to move her. At any rate, her lips began to quiver,

and without warning she'd burst into childish, blubbering sobs.

"Oh—Mr. Sargent!" she gasped. "I'm so—so ashamed. Don't tell mother—*please* don't tell mother—"

I took one step forward and she tumbled into my arms.

"Oh, my God!" Towny exclaimed, while I soothed her in most paternal fashion. "She's nothing but a *baby*." Whereupon he jostled me rudely out of the way and himself assumed control of things.

"Come, now, don't be a little fool, Win," he protested, stroking her tousled curls half-indulgently and half-angrily; "dry your eyes now—dry your eyes and we'll go in to dinner."

With decided generalship he wielded his big handkerchief, mopping away the tears and blowing her funny little nose rather roughly. "Don't let the *servants* hear you bawling."

"I don't care about the servants, Towny," she wailed. "But Mr. Sargent—"

He flared up at that.

"Oh, don't mind *him*," he snapped; the glare he treated me to showed how much, in his opinion, *I* counted. "Stop sniffling—or we'll go in to dinner without you."

IV

In a way, Towny was to be pitied. He'd reached the age at which all boys, the reasonable as well as the unmanageable, are of a most overweening conceit. When you're eighteen you can't help swaggering; you've attained man's estate functionally, but your brain is still that of a clumsy cub. Towny's was the sophomoric state. He should have been brushing up against dozens of young males in his own dazzling predicament; he should have been working out his problems in their company. Instead, his proper development would be perforce thwarted. He wouldn't be allowed to wriggle with healthy speed out of the adolescent welter and thus achieve something like stability. He should have been trying his hand at a number of fluffy females; but here he was tied legally to the first one he'd encountered. He was married, he was the master of a big establishment, at the most perilous moment of his career.

I could feel sorry for Towny in his outlandish pomposity when I wasn't actually face to face with him. In his presence, however, my pride shut down sharply every time on my indulgence; after all, I was something over forty years old, and I'd been accustomed to courteous treatment not only from my inferiors and equals but even from my superiors. The great Brett Browning, for example, was a splendid specimen of the men head and shoulders above me who yet could appear unconscious of their eminence.

Well, Towny assuredly *wasn't* a bigger person than I. I felt the warmest sympathy for the below-stairs mutters and execrations at "Bellevue." If I was looked upon by the boy as rather less than human, the servants were viewed as downright curs. It was the luckiest thing in the world that the menials should adore little Winnie; otherwise they wouldn't have stood Towny's exactions for a moment.

An observer of intelligence could size up in twenty-four hours the situation in the Redmond establishment. The ridiculous young master ruled everything with an iron hand. He ordered his forces around with all the insolence of an Oriental potentate; and yet even he must have realized that not one of his behests would have been executed had not Winnie been there with her sweet smile and her traditional training in the matter of domestics. The suspicion of his own impotence probably had much to do with Towny's brutality. The servants, a snobbish lot, let him see what an upstart they thought him; but, for the sake of his wife, they accepted him. Sometimes they carried out their duties in sullen silence; sometimes they sauced him glibly.

Towny's man did valet service for me during my visit.

"Watch him," the boy warned me the first day, while the dignified Jenckes tip-

in the past, I'd never given the boy the slightest reason for harbouring a grudge; I've gone over my entire relation with him and satisfied myself of my perfect innocence on that score. His attitude, however, throughout my stay, was jauntily, almost maliciously superior. Probably he wasn't "getting back at me"; I suppose he was just so damned proud of his greatness that he couldn't help boasting all day and all night. Oh, I made allowances many times; still, it does ruffle a man's good humour to be treated like an old-maid aunt from the country.

Winnie was an out-and-out darling; she paraded nothing before me but her love for Towny. And she really didn't parade *that;* she couldn't, however, keep it out of her face or her actions. By the first evening of my visit I'd got to the point of adoring her. She hadn't changed much since the day, three years before, when I had last seen her as plain little Winnie Browning; I remembered her quite vividly now—she'd been playing croquet, her plump legs *were* bare, the short socks untidily rumpled. It pained me not a little at present to look on while Towny plied her with cigarettes and high-balls. I took occasion to drop a well-timed remonstrance when Towny strolled into my room just before dinner.

"I realize you're your own boss now, Towny—every gesture you make shouts that fact," I remarked. "You'll still accept a suggestion or two about Winnie, though—eh?"

Towny's shrug wasn't exactly polite.

"What's your complaint, old man?" he nevertheless conceded.

"Well, now the honeymoon's over, I'd put her back on a milk diet, if I were you. The fact that she's a wife doesn't make her a woman. Whisky's *not* the thing for a girl of sixteen." I let him have a stern scowl to reinforce my words.

He froze up at once.

"Don't you worry about my methods," he told me coolly. "I know what's good for my wife. I can look out for her—without anybody's advice. It's damned nice of you, trying to give me the guiding hand and all that. But I'd rather go my own gait—without interference." This from the boy who had often sat in humility at my feet and drunk in every word of my sage discourse!

"Very well, Towny." I'm afraid I was too much amazed to give my retort great force. "Your particular gait won't bring the Brownings around very soon. Don't forget that."

"Oh!" He was quite at ease on that score. "Much I care for the Brownings! They can go to the devil, so far as Winnie and I are concerned. *We* don't want them."

He swung out of the room without paying the slightest heed to my parting shot. "Don't let Brett hear you talk like that!" I'd shouted in an unavailing fury. "You might have to get out and *work* for your Winnie, my boy! You might—"

At that the door slammed to behind him.

I waited in the drawing-room a good half-hour before Winnie and Towny put in an appearance. The moment I caught sight of them racing arm-in-arm down the great staircase I saw what was up. The crazy-headed boy had evidently determined to teach me a lesson, to prove to me the folly of interfering. He must have had a wonderful array of drinks sent up; he must have coaxed poor Winnie into a downright tippling match—just to show the old mossback a thing or two.

"Say 'Truly rural' for the gentleman, Win," commanded Towny directly they'd joined me.

His bad joke missed the mark. I stood before him, no doubt looking awkward enough in all conscience; even so, I think my disgust lent me *some* dignity.

Winnie, who had started out in a ripple of babyish mirth, broke off abruptly. For a long moment she and I looked at each other. Perhaps she'd only got to the lachrymal stage of her infantile debauch; on the other hand, perhaps my genuine pity had the authentic touch necessary to move her. At any rate, her lips began to quiver,

and without warning she'd burst into childish, blubbering sobs.

"Oh—Mr. Sargent!" she gasped. "I'm so—so ashamed. Don't tell mother—*please* don't tell mother—"

I took one step forward and she tumbled into my arms.

"Oh, my God!" Towny exclaimed, while I soothed her in most paternal fashion. "She's nothing but a *baby*." Whereupon he jostled me rudely out of the way and himself assumed control of things.

"Come, now, don't be a little fool, Win," he protested, stroking her tousled curls half-indulgently and half-angrily; "dry your eyes now—dry your eyes and we'll go in to dinner."

With decided generalship he wielded his big handkerchief, mopping away the tears and blowing her funny little nose rather roughly. "Don't let the *servants* hear you bawling."

"I don't care about the servants, Towny," she wailed. "But Mr. Sargent—"

He flared up at that.

"Oh, don't mind *him*," he snapped; the glare he treated me to showed how much, in his opinion, *I* counted. "Stop sniffling—or we'll go in to dinner without you."

IV

In a way, Towny was to be pitied. He'd reached the age at which all boys, the reasonable as well as the unmanageable, are of a most overweening conceit. When you're eighteen you can't help swaggering; you've attained man's estate functionally, but your brain is still that of a clumsy cub. Towny's was the sophomoric state. He should have been brushing up against dozens of young males in his own dazzling predicament; he should have been working out his problems in their company. Instead, his proper development would be perforce thwarted. He wouldn't be allowed to wriggle with healthy speed out of the adolescent welter and thus achieve something like stability. He should have been trying his hand at a number of fluffy females; but here he was tied legally to the first one he'd encountered. He was married, he was the master of a big establishment, at the most perilous moment of his career.

I could feel sorry for Towny in his outlandish pomposity when I wasn't actually face to face with him. In his presence, however, my pride shut down sharply every time on my indulgence; after all, I was something over forty years old, and I'd been accustomed to courteous treatment not only from my inferiors and equals but even from my superiors. The great Brett Browning, for example, was a splendid specimen of the men head and shoulders above me who yet could appear unconscious of their eminence.

Well, Towny assuredly *wasn't* a bigger person than I. I felt the warmest sympathy for the below-stairs mutters and execrations at "Bellevue." If I was looked upon by the boy as rather less than human, the servants were viewed as downright curs. It was the luckiest thing in the world that the menials should adore little Winnie; otherwise they wouldn't have stood Towny's exactions for a moment.

An observer of intelligence could size up in twenty-four hours the situation in the Redmond establishment. The ridiculous young master ruled everything with an iron hand. He ordered his forces around with all the insolence of an Oriental potentate; and yet even he must have realized that not one of his behests would have been executed had not Winnie been there with her sweet smile and her traditional training in the matter of domestics. The suspicion of his own impotence probably had much to do with Towny's brutality. The servants, a snobbish lot, let him see what an upstart they thought him; but, for the sake of his wife, they accepted him. Sometimes they carried out their duties in sullen silence; sometimes they sauced him glibly.

Towny's man did valet service for me during my visit.

"Watch him," the boy warned me the first day, while the dignified Jenckes tip-

toed about not two inches from my elbow. "He'll take advantage of you unless you keep him in his place from morning till night. He's an arrogant scoundrel."

My only response to that had been my sweetest smile in the direction of Jenckes. For the rest of my sojourn I had a difficult time keeping the valet's grievances bottled up inside him; he'd taken me straightway as a fellow-sufferer and did his best to enlist me as a confidant.

Towny, for all his high-handed, magnificently autocratic methods, had inconceivable depths of ignorance within him. The fiasco that accompanied my departure from "Bellevue," though it infuriated me beyond measure, aroused in me also a genuine pity for my young friend.

The motor was already at the door, and I was taking leave of Towny and Winnie in their vast drawing-room. Imagine my surprise when Towny, in the act of shaking my hand, asked with decided sharpness:

"See here, old man, did you tip Jenckes just now?"

"Why, yes!" I returned in amazement.

"How much?" He shot it at me with an explosive force that made me jump.

Really, this was going too far! I summoned all my superb haughtiness for my reply.

"I gave him what I thought the good fellow deserved."

Towny left the room at that—doubtless to impart some insulting command, on the subject of my precious comfort, to the chauffeur outside. I proceeded to linger over Winnie's little hand and to chatter with her a moment. I loved Winnie and felt a real homesickness at leaving her.

Then all at once, as I turned away, I beheld on the threshold a palely glaring Towny and an apoplectic Jenckes.

"You're to tell Mr. Sargent you're sorry. You've broken the rules of the house. Give him back his tip and apologize." Towny's eyes were blazing with wrath.

I was utterly speechless; if someone had dealt me a blow beneath the belt I couldn't have had less breath in my body. I think Jenckes shared my predicament. Certainly neither he nor I helped the scene along to a conclusion. Towny's incredible conduct, however, brought out all Winnie's bravery.

She stepped up boldly to her husband.

"Why, Towny!" she cried out. "You ought to be *ashamed* of yourself. You'd better do every bit of the apologizing yourself."

In a frenzy, Towny pushed her aside.

"This is *my* house," he yelled. "This is *my house!* Jenckes has disobeyed my orders and he's got to pay for it."

But Winnie was a match for him.

"Don't mind him, Jenckes," she ordered with the prettiest firmness. "You deserve whatever Mr. Sargent's given you. You may go now—"

It was with a feeling almost of physical collapse that I at last threw myself into the motor. I hadn't uttered a word during the brief scene; I'd just stood there gasping. My exit must have been mirth-provoking; I had crept away, like an apprehended felon, at the heels of the irate Jenckes and had hurried—nay, scuttled!—out of the house.

When I got to the station the train had pulled out. That meant I must spend another night at "Bellevue." For a time I thought seriously of putting my hat-box under my head and curling up till next morning on the one and only iron bench the railroad hut boasted. I'd soon decided that such a course was mere folly; so, giving my courage a shake, I posted back to "Bellevue." I found Winnie alone in the drawing-room. Her eyes were red, but she was blithe and plucky. We both burst into a merry laugh when she informed me ruefully that the servants were to clear out in a body the next day.

I learned that night from Jenckes that Winnie's statement hadn't been strictly veracious. The domestics whose duties were confined exclusively to the needs of the young mistress were staying on.

"You couldn't budge *them* in a thousand years," Jenckes opined.

V

I SPENT the fall and winter abroad. Naturally, I speculated a great deal on the fortunes of Winnie and Towny; no actual tidings of them reached me, however. I returned to New York in March. A fortnight later I received a wire from Towny.

"I want to see you at once," the message rather peremptorily stated. "In an accident—not serious but uncomfortable. Come to St. Luke's hospital the first moment you have."

Alone with Towny in his hospital room—I'd answered the summons at once and in all docility—I gave the boy a shrewd examination while I shook his left hand. His right arm was in splints and a good half-dozen ugly welts stood out on his pink cheeks. At a cursory glance he would still have appeared miraculously fresh and rosy, despite his purplish abrasions.

My careful scrutiny, on the other hand, had soon convinced me of the change the half-year had wrought. His youthful good looks were still quite vividly there; but I could perceive now, with a startling clearness, the weakness behind his charm, the disintegrating defect that had somehow caused his sinews to warp and relax and that had given the once firmly jutting chin a faintly feeble deflection. Towny'd never had any superfluous flesh; to-day he was downright lank. Dissipating was having the effect, not of endowing him with incipient flabbiness and promiscuous, loose pouches, but of draining him to emaciation. His eyes positively shocked me; they appeared to have diminished in size and to have become as darting and nervous as an ape's.

Towny's insolence hadn't been toned down a jot; he hadn't spoken ten words before I realized that.

"You're the logical man for getting me out of scrapes," he told me, with something of the air of a man calling on a sneaking, crooked hack-lawyer. "You won't desert me now?"

He put it in the form of a question, but he evidently intended it for a command.

"It all depends," I remarked laconically. "I'll do everything in my power to help Winnie."

"Damned kind of you!" He shrugged. "Well—this will be helping Winnie."

He shifted his position impatiently in his bed. "First of all, I want you to tell her the truth; then I want you to gag the press—keep them from publishing a lot of lies about me, you know."

I could see the boy was frightened and yet not a little proud of the fact that he was important enough to be pounced upon by the newspapers.

"Let me hear the story," I suggested. "If I decide to get you out of this mess, there'll probably be no time to lose. You'd best be quick."

He heaved himself up on his uninjured arm and scowled at me in obvious perplexity.

"Oh, hell!" he then exclaimed. "The whole business was innocent enough. Winnie was in a bad temper yesterday; we had a row and I cleared out—to let her get over it alone, you see. There's not much else to say. Of course, I was fighting drunk; I knocked a chap down in a restaurant—"

I nodded; that item afforded a neat explanation of the bruises. Towny continued sullenly after a moment:

"I bolted with the girl—it was *perfectly* innocent."

"What girl?" I interrupted, glaring at him.

"Why, the other fellow's girl." Towny was scornful of my stupidity. "I put her in my motor. The other man tumbled into a taxi and chased us. We hit a telegraph pole. I woke up here this morning."

I watched him for a perceptible space. Yes, he *was* scared, poor damned fool, but he was proud, too, and exultant at his wicked superiority to humdrum me.

"So you want me to tell Winnie *that?*" I scoffed.

"Oh, be reasonable!" he protested. "Tell her, old man, that I'd had too much to drink and fell downstairs at the club."

I waived any response to this in favour of another question. "She knows nothing of what happened to you after you left her? Isn't she probably beside herself with worry?"

"This isn't the *first* time I've spent the night out," Towny snapped with acerbity.

"Of course not, of course not!" I weighed it. "Well, Towny," I let him know at length, "I'll do my best to muffle the press for you; but I won't tell Winnie your pack of lies."

He caught hold of my sleeve in a genuine and complete surrender to his terror.

"For God's sake, don't go back on me!" he pleaded with a strident intensity. "Can't you understand? Winnie loves me—I'm everything to her. She'd die if she thought I'd done anything wrong or underhanded. It's for her sake I'm asking this; I don't care for myself—I swear I don't."

I could have kicked him all over the room now, broken arm, bruises and all. I refrained, however. It suddenly struck me that there might be a foundation in fact behind his sentimental plaint. Poor Winnie probably still adored him.

I tweaked my sleeve away from him and walked to the door.

"I'll go to Winnie," I said by way of farewell. "I'll use my own judgment; I think now that I'll let her have the straight truth."

"You won't, you won't," he called after me. "You won't have the heart, once you've seen her."

At the Redmond town-house I was informed that Winnie was not at home. Mr. and Mrs. Browning had taken her away with them an hour ago. Then for the first time I noticed a big van drawn up at the curb; a liveried man was superintending the loading of trunks and bags by the dozen. So the story had seeped out and Winnie had come to her senses! Brett Browning had stood aside and waited for Towny to hang himself; Winnie was back, on the very day of the event, in the bosom of her family.

As I walked away, I felt the oddest tug at my heart-strings.

"Poor Towny, poor God-forsaken Towny!" I found myself repeating half-aloud.

VI

THAT was two years ago. To-day Winnie is Mrs. William Bradshaw. She's the gayest little thing imaginable—gay to the hectic point. She's also a devoted wife; but I honestly believe Towny's still at the core of her heart. There are rumours current that she's sometimes seen in public in a state of wistful, equivocal incoherence. I don't know; I often wonder if Brett's scheme failed to take into account a possible lifelong lesson learned under Towny's tutelage.

Towny's making a brave show about town. Of course, Brett settled a big sum on him outright. I have no definite knowledge of how much remains unspent. Last week I advanced enough money to cover the amount of a worthless cheque the boy had scribbled off. If he doesn't make good, I shall have to refuse another favour of that sort. His request was couched in the insolent language I've come to expect from him. It doesn't infuriate me now; it strikes me as immensely pathetic.

Every so often the realization comes over me that Towny has yet to attain his twenty-first birthday and that Winnie won't be nineteen for some months. Poor little Winnie! Poor Towny! Poor benighted babies!

PAR PERSUASION

By Gaston Roupnel

GRIFFOTTE voulait être riche. Ce fut la grande affaire de sa vie. Il y passa toute son existence, mâchant et remâchant son idée. Il en avait toujours l'air fâché d'un serpent à qui on marche sur la queue. Mais, comme il disait :

— J'ai été trop privé étant petiot. Je me suis juré de crever dans la peau d'un riche. J'y mettrai le temps qu'il faut, et toute la misère nécessaire. Mais il faut qu'un jour je me sente des sous !

Sa vie fut donc un immense enfer de labeurs et de privations, au milieu duquel se bâtissait un tout petit Paradis an pièces de cent sous.

Il avait son père avec lui . . . un vieux à vie chiche, qui avait oublié d'être brave homme, tellement il avait été occupé. Il en avait été de lui comme il en est encore de son fils, qui répète sans cesse.

— Le dimanche après-midi, je suis aussi honnête homme que n'importe qui. Mais, les jours de semaine, pardi ! . . . je suis bien obligé de me défendre ! . . .

Et le vieux Griffotte s'était défendu. Il en était résulté, de tout cela, une vielle âme indigente—étriquée, comme si elle avait vécu entre les coups de bâton—et qui avait maintenant grand besoin de repos.

Cela ne faisait pas l'affaire de Griffotte fils, qui n'aime pas les gens qui se reposent.

— Bonsoir ! leur crie-t-il. Qu'est-ce que vous ferez alors quand vous serez mort ?

Le vieux père Griffotte prétextait, pour ne rien faire, "une espèce d'imbécillité qu'il avait par à travers les jambes." Mais le fils prétendait que cette imbécillité-là le tenait de la tête aux pieds.

—Qui ! grondait-il, ce vieux-là . . . quand on lui parle d'aller à la charrue, ou seulement de ranger les vaches . . . il fait l'esprit perdu ; et il ne se retrouve de mémoire que devant le garde-manger !

Mais cette mémoire-là se perdit à son tour.

Un beau jour, chez Griffotte, on achevait le goûter de midi. On avait mangé une potée où le lard avait discrètement fait acte de présence. Le vieux Griffotte cherchait dans le plat, avec la fourchette.

— Qué que tu fouilles donc là-dedans ? lui demanda le fils, sans bonne grâce.

— Ah ! . . . y cherche un cht'i bout de viande ! . . .

Mais, là-dessus, le fils éclata :

— Un cht'i bout de viande ! . . . de la vraie viande ! . . .

La Marie Communeux, la femme de Griffotte, essaya de la calmer. Mais Griffotte clamait :

— . . . Vois un peu ce vieux dévorant ! . . . Avec lui, il faudrait toujours être le couteau à la main pour poignarder les vaches et les cochons ! . . . Mais bonsoir ! je respecte le bétail, moi ! . . . Il fait ce qu'il peut ! . . . Ce n'est pas une raison parce qu'il est les bêtes, pour le tuer toujours à propos de rien ! . . .

Le vieillard baissait la tête sous la bourrasque d'injures. Il avait descendu, presque jusque dans l'assiette, son pauvre visage à farce. Il se défendait mal :

— Allons ! . . . Te v'là donc encore avec de la chicane plein la tête ! . . .

— De la chicane ! Parce que je dis la vérité ! . . . T'es un vieil avale-tout-cru qui dévorerait des départements entiers de vaches rôties ! . . .

— Moi . . . Y t'ai bin nourri arrié . . quand t'étais petiot! . . .

— Nourri! . . . T'appelle ça "nourri!" . . . Une jeunesse où le bout de lard y a été plus rare que l'empereur! . . Nourri avec des poignées de soupe, sans autre beurre ou assaisonnement que d'être mangées chaudes! . . .

Il ajouta, plus calmé et comme en raisonnant:

— J'admets qu'on mange! . . . C'est même nécessaire. Mais le faire exprès . . . Non! alors! . . . je ne comprends plus! . . .

Mais c'est alors qu'il eut sa fameuse idée. Quand le vieux fut parti, il s'en expliqua avec sa femme, la Marie Communeux, avec le Patrice, le garçon loué, et avec le "Lolo," le petit berger. On en rit d'avance et on se fixa les rôles.

Le soir, ayant fini son "bricolage," le vieux s'en vint furtivement s'asseoir à sa place habituelle, derrière la porte. Il y resta enfoui dans l'ombre. Il rêvassait. Le temps passait. La vieille tête, à songeries bonasses, se penchait sous le poids misérable des souvenirs.

Le temps passait . . . Sur le coup des huit heures, le vieux redressa soudain la tête, et s'avisa que la table était essuyée, et la vaisselle au net:

— Hein! . . . fit-il doucement. On ne soupe donc voire pas, ce soir? . . .

Griffotte, qui feignait de lire un morceau de journal, s'exclama bruyamment:

— Oh! Oué là donc! . . . Ah! elle est bin bonne, ct'elle-ci! . . .

Et il appela à témoin tout son monde, la Marie Communeux, le garçon loué, le Lolo. Et il criait sa gaieté rustaude:

— Le vieux qui ne se rappelle plus qu'il vient de souper! . . . Il parle de resouper une seconde fois! . . .

Tout le monde riait si bien qu'il y eut juste de place dans la cuisine pour que chacun pût s'y tordre tout son aise. Puis on blagua le vieux, qui finit aussi par se rigoler de lui-même. La Marie Communeux lui racontait son souper, en petits gestes faits avec une cuiller à pot:

— Mais, voyons! . . . vieux! . . . Vous ne vous rappelez pas que je vous ai même donné un bout de gras . . . Même que vous n'en vouliez plus? . . .

Et dire que le vieux ne se rappelait pas une chose comme ça! . . .

— Faut-il tout de même que j'aie perdu la mémoire! . . . répétait le vieux, avec une souriante résignation qui le mena sagement se coucher et dormir.

Mais le lendemain, vers une heure de l'aprés-midi, il se réveilla de nouveau, d'une paresseuse songerie au coin du feu, pour parler de "goûter." Cette fois, Griffotte vociféra:

— Le v'là qui parle de regoûter! . . .

N'y avait-il pas de quoi s'arracher les cheveux? On voulait le calmer; mais comme il le disait:

— Vous ne voyez pas que ce vieux-là va partout aller dans le pays dire qu'on ne lui donne pas à manger sa faim! . . . Alors qu'on se tue de lui faire des cino repas par jour!

Mais le vieux n'avait pas des intentions si méchantes. On lui expliqua, et il faillit se rappeler, en effet, qu'il avait mangé deux bouts de lard plutôt qu'un. Le soir, avant de se coucher, il finit, à force d'explications, par se rappeler qu'il avait fait de bonnes quatre heures; et qu'il avait mangé au souper quelque chose qui devait être du veau avec des épinards. Mais cela l'étonna encore de ne pas s'être rappelé une chose comme cela.

Eh bien! le lendemain, il fallut encore recommencer toutes ces explications, sans cela il se serait encore couché en prétendant qu'il n'avait rien mangé de la journée:

— Alors qu'il a fait ses cinq forts repas, et qu'il s'est chaque fois par après curé les dents! . . .

Griffotte continuait en expliquant au village:

— Ça ne peut pas durer comme ça! . . . Plus il mangé moins il s'en rappelle! . . . C'est un cas spécial! . . . Un estomac qui ne sait plus d'où il en est! . . . C'est à soigner en ville, ça! . . .

Le maire vint. Il interrogea le

vieillard, si faible qu'il ne pouvait se lever, et parlait à grand'peine. A force de lui rafraichir les souvenirs de l'estomac, le vieillard finissait par se rappeler vaguement avoir mangé tous les bons repas que la Marie Communeux lui énumérait. D'ailleurs, le Patrice et le Lolo étaient là pour témoigner que tout cela avait été mangé, remangé, archi-mangé! . . .

— Oh! oui! . . . faisait le vieux, j'ai dû, en effet, manger de tout ça! . . . Mais à force d'être vieux, sur le moment, je ne m'en rappelle plus! . . .

Or, comme disait Griffotte:

— Ça intéressait sûrement les médecins de Dijon de soigner un cas comme ça!

A la fin des fins, le maire comprit, se tordit, but le vin blanc et fit ce qu'il fallait faire.

Le vieux père Griffotte vient d'être hospitalisé aux Petites Sœurs des Pauvres, à Dijon. Il est parti sur une méchante carriole, que Griffotte, frotté d'oignons, a arrosée de ses larmes. Après quoi, bon débarras!

Le vieux Griffotte est maintenant un de ces petits vieux à bancs, qui se chauffent au soleil et se racontent leurs gloires.

— Ici, l'appétit se perd, fait-il sévèrement, mais, là-bas, à la maison, je faisais mes cinq forts repas par jour. J'en faisais tellement que, à la fin, j'arrivais à ne plus m'en rappeler!

I CANNOT CALL THE SAINTS TO MIND

By John McClure

I WAS a gray philosopher
In all my measured breath
Beholding only, with the saints,
The chrysalis of death.

Love made a warlock of the wind,
A wizard of the sea,
He cast a spell of magic
On a weird lady.

He cast a goblin beauty
Somehow upon the moon—
And here am I, a-singing,
Giddy with a tune!

I had not ever dreamed to find
Such alchemy as this:
I cannot call the saints to mind
Nor their philosophies.

THE ETERNAL QUADRANGLE

By Donna Shinn

"YOU can understand," said the Wife, bitterly, "that it was not easy for me to come here today."

"When did he tell you that there was a second woman in his life?" asked the Mistress.

"He did not tell me," replied the Wife, the colour mounting to her face. "I guessed there must be—someone else."

The Mistress noticed the deep shadows under the eyes of the other woman, the figure distorted by child-bearing, and the gray hairs beginning to show at the temples.

"How long have you been living with George?" questioned the Wife, anxiously.

"Six years this month," answered the Mistress, with a hollow voice.

The Wife drew in her breath quickly, and closed her eyes as she said:

"And my youngest child was born three years ago this month!"

The Mistress bit her lip with anger. Six years of her young life she had devoted to this man; he had never told her of a second child. What a fool she had been!

"I will go away," she offered; but she knew she lied. Where could she go? She was quite alone in the world save for the man.

A light leapt into the other woman's eyes, but died out as suddenly as it had come.

"That would not help," she said sadly. "He will never come back to me. There would be too many painful memories—it would not be possible!"

"What are you going to do?" asked the Mistress.

"I suppose divorce is the only solution," answered the Wife with an effort. "I cannot go on like this."

"But the children—what about them?" questioned the other.

"I shall take the girl and leave the boy for him," replied the Wife.

"It is beautiful of you to be so nice about it," said the Mistress.

"I love him," said the other, simply.

"He is still very fond of you," said the Mistress, trying to be kind.

"That is small consolation," sighed the Wife, "when he remains with *you*."

As the Wife rose to go, she said:

"When everything is settled, please be kind to my little boy."

A year later the wife obtained a divorce, and the man immediately married . . . the third woman in his life.

BEAUTY IN THE BALLROOM

A PERFECT PARTNER—a perfect floor—and the knowledge that you are looking your very best! What more can the heart of woman desire in these dancing times when on such pleasure bent? Be

"VALAZE" BEAUTY-AIDS

will impart a fresh alluring beauty to your skin—will relieve your face of all signs of strain, ill-health or fatigue. Perhaps one of those mentioned below will interest you; if not, many others are described fully in INSTRUCTIVE BROCHURE, which will be sent on application.

VALAZE CRUSHED ROSE LEAVES
A new and delightful colouring for the face. It reproduces natural tints to perfection. Price 3/- and 6/-.

VALAZE LIP LUSTRE
incomparable for pale, parched lips. Price 3/6.

VALAZE WHITENER
Invaluable for beautifying and whitening the hands, arms, and throat. *I will not rub off.* Price 3/6.

VALAZE SNOW LOTION
A liquid powder which invests the face with an exquisite softness of colour—white, pink or cream. Price 4/6

MADAME HELENA RUBINSTEIN, 24, Grafton Street, Bond Street, London, W. 1

Pomeroy Day Cream

A Fragrant Non-greasy Cream. Can be used at any time with visibly good effect. Makes and keeps the skin smooth, soft and fresh, and the complexion clear. Subtly scented, and contains nothing to encourage the growth of superfluous hair.

In dainty half-crown vases at high-class Chemists, Perfumers, etc.

Mrs. POMEROY, Ltd.,
29 Old Bond Street, London, W.1.
& 185 High Street, Kensington.
(Face Treatments at above addresses and branches.)

There is a reason for daddy's "smooth morning face."

It's all in the lather! For "Regina" lather has that rich, emollient quality that helps the razor and ensures the ideal shave.

PRICE'S
REGINA
SHAVING STICK

is essentially a shaving soap for the manly man.

THE STICK TO STICK TO

Made by
PRICE'S, BATTERSEA, S.W.11

Nice, smoove Daddy!

ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS

By Mary Pitcairn

The "Save the Birds" folk must be having an arduous time just now, when eight out of every ten hats is massed with ospreys or paradise plumes. We have grown quite accustomed to the small models entirely covered with ospreys, but all such efforts are eclipsed by a model turban in Kolinsky, the fur merely serving as the base or support for a young forest of ospreys standing at least ten inches high and shading from fawn to yellow, gold, bronze, and black. Then, too, there is velvet hat after velvet hat acting as background to the sweeping paradise plumes exactly matching it in colour, while contrast to these is provided by the many dull gold and silver lace models with their sparse floating fronds of black feather. Tam-O'-Shanter shapes are still much to the fore, a novelty being carried out in nut-brown velvet and thickly scattered with big gilt metal ornaments closely resembling gipsy earrings. This type of cap is much to be seen, too, for theatre wear, and close-fitting head-dresses have become a real feature of the evening toilet. The other night at the Comedy, when that amusing play of A. A. Milne's, "The Romantic Age," was in progress, at least half the women in the stalls were wearing head-dresses of some sort, most of them, it must be confessed, all too reminiscent of a boudoir cap. Especially was this the case with the lace creations. The majority were carried out in silver lace, one such being quite unnecessarily large with a small brim and huge bunches of grapes trailing towards the shoulder. Behind the footlights, also, caps were much in the picture, Miss Lottie Venne treating us to a variety of them, the most remarkable being an affair in oxidized lace with little erections on either side that comically resembled cats' ears. Below these were bunches of many-coloured flowers, and accompanying the cap was a marvellous tea-gown, half pale grey corded ninon, half blue chiffon velvet. Of Miss Barbara Hoffe's dresses as the romantic "Melisande," I liked best the white chiffon frock of the first act, and with it she wore the quaintest little transparent bolero—that is the term that best describes it, I think—with short lace sleeves, and long panels at either side deeply edged with fringe.

Evening dresses are still being much under the influence of the train. Even whole gowns of sequined and jetted fabric find some excuse to introduce a train of charmeuse, the twin variety developed from each side being much in evidence. Miss Madeleine Seymour introduced a novelty recently in a train that started life as a single sleeve and fell in wonderful draperies at the back before descending to the floor. Most trains have inconspicuous loops for carrying purposes, and are cut on lines to ensure their grace even when so raised for dancing.

THINGS THAT NEED NOT HAPPEN

Double chins, saggy cheeks, and other unnatural formations arise more from carelessness than from any other cause. Such things are, perhaps, greater foes to beauty than is a bad complexion,

ADAIR Ganesh Preparations

92, NEW BOND STREET, LONDON, W.
Phone: GERRARD 3782.
5, RUE CAMBON, PARIS.
23, EAST 56TH STREET, NEW YORK.

Ganesh Eastern Oil is the best skin food and muscle producer in the world. Will of itself remove lines, fill out hollows and give back life and elasticity to the skin, 6/6, 12/6, 21/6, 35/6.

Ganesh Eastern Lily Lotion, made in three colours, is a liquid powder, perfectly safe, and a great skin beautifier, 6/6, 9/6, 12/6.

Ganesh Diable Skin Tonic closes the pores, strengthens and whitens the skin, and enables it to withstand change of temperature. Also a splendid wash for the eyes, 6/6, 9/6, 12/6, 24/-.

Ganesh Eastern Cream keeps the skin soft and fine, contains a little of the Oil, and is made up to suit all skins, 2/6, 4/6, 7/6, 12/6.

Advice Gratis.
Write for Free Book.

Miss Gladys Cooper Explains Some Beauty Secrets

The Popular London Star Favours Simple Methods.

I have been asked to give a few simple recipes that I know, either through personal use or by observation, to be valuable to the toilet, and which are within the reach of the average women. In these days of £100 facial treatments and elaborate and expensive beautifying processes my suggestions may read like lessons in economy, but they are not especially so intended. They are merely practical suggestions, in which the keynote is "effectiveness." All the materials or ingredients which I mention are either already at hand in the home or may be readily procured from the chemist. Fortunately I do not suffer from the ailments or troubles enumerated below, but some people who are not so fortunate have told me their experiences, and with your permission I will set forth some remedies which they have found to be efficacious.

Home Made Hair Tonic.

My acquaintances say that a good stimulant to the natural growth of the hair is a very simple, effective and safe stimulating lotion made up by mixing one ounce of boranium with ¼ pint of bay rum. This may be applied to the hair roots occasionally with the finger tips with good results.

Complexion Renewals.

Complexion experts advise me that a normal, healthy complexion is constantly renewing itself by dropping off in tiny flakes of worn-out tissue, thus revealing the fresh young skin underneath. They say that when this process is checked by age, exposure or some of many causes, the complexion becomes dull and ugly. The rational treatment recommended is to help the skin perform its natural functions of "shedding" worn-out tissue. For this purpose, I am informed, there is nothing so good as pure mercolized wax, used for a few nights, just as you would use a face cream. It is claimed that it possesses a special affinity for the effete scarf-skin, which it quickly removes by absorbing it. The face, I am assured, will soon look much younger and prettier under this treatment.

Removing Superfluous Hair.

I have been told of some most remarkable experiments in removing superfluous hair, roots and all, with what is said to be a perfectly harmless substance known as phelactine. It is claimed for this preparation that it is not a depilatory and therefore does not burn or injure the skin. With a candle flame it is first melted to a syrup-like consistency and while still warm is smeared on the skin over the superfluous hair. Although it is removed almost immediately the effect is supposed to paralyse and loosen the hair roots, for when it is removed the hair should come right with it and the roots themselves. I am told that in many cases the growth never reappears, and that even if it does so it returns only after a very long time and in so much weaker form that it is easy to cope with by means of a repeated application of phelactine. I understand that the method is becoming so well known that many chemists are now supplying phelactine in specially prepared packages containing full instructions for home use.

Is Powder Necessary?

A great many women object to using powder, for various reasons. The following formula is a good one: Dissolve an ounce of cleminite in four tablespoonfuls of water, or witch-hazel, and use it as a face lotion, smoothing the skin with the fingers until it is dry. This method is perfectly harmless. I am told that a really beautiful, natural, velvety bloom results and remains for many hours quite unaffected by the most trying conditions out of doors or in the ball room or theatre, and that it gives a much more natural appearance to some skins than does ordinary powder.

MISS GLADYS COOPER.
Photo] [*Wrather & Buy.*

Grey Hair.

I have observed many attempts of many people to conceal grey hair. Some of these experiments were amusing, some disastrous, and some were successful. Personally, I believe I shall let my hair turn when the appointed time comes, but if I were going to try to evade it, I would give a trial to a real old "grandmother" formula that would probably do the work. This formula, I am informed, has been used with degrees of success for many generations, and consists merely of two ounces of concentrate of tammalite mixed with three ounces of bay rum. It is applied to the grey hair a few times with a small sponge, and ladies tell me it appears to darken the hair to a natural shade, not like a dye, but gradually and naturally.

The Curling Iron.

Don't use a hot iron to curl your hair. Some of my friends make the cunningest sort of curls wherever they want them simply by dampening the hair with liquid silmerine before retiring at night When the hair is dry in the morning it will be softly curly just where you want it to be. This method is perfectly harmless, even beneficial to the hair and the curls last a long time. The liquid is quite pleasant and neither sticky nor greasy.

How to Shampoo.

Most women, I am informed, do not know how to use stallax properly when shampooing with it. Unless the hair is naturally very oily, a stallax shampoo may sometimes leave it rather dry. But I am told if you will apply olive oil freely to your hair and scalp just before shampooing with stallax, the result is most delightful. The hair will be left clean, soft, bright and wavy, the olive oil having properly balanced the action of this wonderful hair cleanser.

Care of the Hands.

An excellent method of putting the hands in fine condition and keeping them so, is to rub them with bicrolium jelly just before retiring at night. This quickly takes away roughness, redness, tan, etc., and makes them soft, white and smooth. After this has been done, an occasional application will keep them in proper form.

Gladys Cooper

NOTE.—This interesting article on beauty culture in general was written by Miss Gladys Cooper at the request of the manufacturers of Pilenta Soap—the best complexion soap in the world. On sale at all chemists.

which can, at great trouble, be covered up. Once lose the contour of your face, and the look of old age makes rapid and steady progress. It is an insidious foe and should be grappled with at once. It is a mistake to think that lost contours cannot be regained. The prevention or removal of a double chin is not a hopeless task by any means, and a little trouble to-day will save much discomfort to-morrow. Many women object to going to bed tied up like a mummy, but this is not at all necessary; much can be done in the dressing and rest hours with Mrs. Adair's chin and forehead straps, which are constructed on the best lines to obtain practical results. A visit to her will show you just what you require if you have neither the time nor the inclination to go in for a regular course of massage or electrical treatment.

HANDSOME MEN

NOTHING so improves personal appearance as that slight smooth tan which comes with exposure to the sun and air.

"SUNBRONZE DE LUXE"

gives a perfect simulation of this tint, is **undetectable, perfectly harmless, and absolutely genuine,** to which its 5,000 testimonials received from every quarter of the globe is sufficient evidence. Unique in method and perfection of result, SUNBRONZE DE LUXE has stood the **TEST OF TIME.** Forwarded free from observation, price **10/6** (*Mark II de Luxe*, **3 guineas**). Fresh Complexion Tint for Ladies, on same principle, at same prices. Direct from

Sunbronze Laboratories,
157, Church Street, Stoke Newington, London.

(*Established* 1902.)

RACING

ANYONE desirous of receiving useful information regarding future racing, especially steeplechasing. — Apply "Dick" Cheriton, Alresford, Hants.

JUST PUBLISHED

The Whole Art of Dining and Table Decorations

The Host and Hostess's Best Household Book.

The ONLY book ever published dealing so comprehensively on the subject of its title and reflecting all that is thoroughly first-class. Contains over 500 pages full of absorbing interest to Epicures and the Hostess who entertains with distinction.

Price 21/- net (Post paid, 22/6). Of all leading Booksellers, or direct from the Publishers—

CARMONA & BAKER, 5, ENDELL STREET, LONDON, W.C.2.

Specimen Illustrations and detailed Prospectus Free on Application.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS.

LITERARY

AUTHORS' MSS. placed at highest prices with over 100 Publishers and Periodicals, also in America. £320 in free Prizes! For awards see *Daily Mail*, 1st of every month. Terms for stamp. CAMBRIDGE LITERARY AGENCY, 8 Henrietta Street, London, W.C. 2.

AUTHORS should send for particulars of the ELDON LITERARY SERVICE, which reduces their labours and enlarges their markets. Write: READER, ELDON LITERARY SERVICE, 30, Fleet Street, E.C. 4.

SCIENCE

SIGNORINA BASTINIA gives the original answers of Planchette to questions asked by earnest inquirers. A test question, 1/6. Apply by letter only, NORTH HOUSE, BISPHAM, LANCASHIRE, with stamp for reply.

ASTROLOGY.—Obtain special astrological study of your life by an expert astrologer. Business, Changes, Matrimony, Future Prospects. Send birth date, p.o. 1/-, stamp. LEO LYON, 34 (H.6), Moorfields, Liverpool.

PERSONAL SERVICE

WRIGHT'S DETECTIVES. For Private Inquiries and Secret Watchings this Agency stands facile princeps for ability; vide Press; consultations free. T.N., London Wall 8,977. Edgar Wright, Manager, 64, MOORGATE ST. (near Bank of England). West End Branch 145, Oxford St., W. (T.N. Museum 6891.)

DRESS

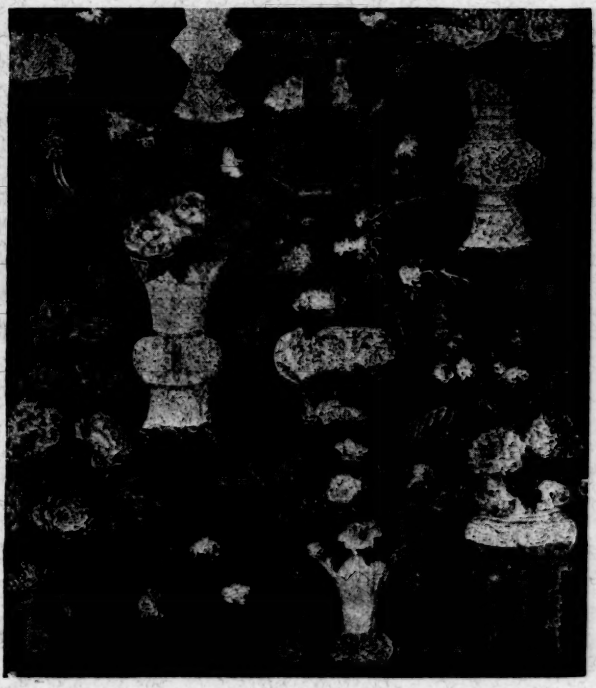
SMART GOWNS, Costumes, Furs, etc., at quarter original cost.—The Central Dress Agency, 14, Upper Baker Street (next to Bakerloo Tube).

BUSINESS TRAINING

ACCOUNTANCY, SECRETARYSHIP, COSTING.—The great professions of the future.—Specialized Postal Courses (exam., coaching, and practical training) taken at home, in spare time, under a staff of Honoursmen, Chartered Accountants, and Barristers-at-Law. The moderate fees may be paid by instalments.

Send postcard for "Students' Guide"; free and post paid.
Metropolitan College, Dept. 335, St. Albans.

Old World Chintzes and Cretonnes



IN the NEW Furnishing Department MARSHALL & SNELGROVE are endeavouring to present to the public something entirely new, and trust this section of their business will help to show the infinite possibilities of artistic decoration in the home.

Write for coloured illustrated catalogue.

CHINESE VASE DESIGN

Hand block printed double warp cretonne on French blue or black ground.

52 in. wide, **11/6** per yard.

Patterns of chintzes and cretonnes will be sent on application.

MARSHALL & SNELGROVE

(DEBENHAMS, LTD.)

VERE STREET & OXFORD STREET, LONDON, W. 1